



Pressures mount on the U3A Board

It is now my privilege to Chair an enthusiastic U3A Board and I would like to pay tribute to the dedication and hard work of all Board members.

U3A Dunedin is a highly successful organisation and its success is attested by the ever increasing membership and waiting list. Other U3A have quite different models for their operation but your Board intends to retain our present modus operandi.

But with success and a larger membership comes additional pressures for the Board: the need to consider larger venues for some courses, how to reduce the waiting list (or indeed, should we have a waiting list?), increased course and membership costs, increased workload to organise and present at least six courses per session, how to ensure an equitable allocation of places in courses.

It was disappointing at the recent AGM that no U3A members, other than the present Board members, put their names forward for nomination to the Board. It is likely that there will be several



By Brian Robinson
Chair, U3A Dunedin

long-standing Board members retiring in the near future and I would urge all members to give serious thought to how they may participate in the U3A organisation. Remember that all members can propose and organise courses. Please contact me or any of the members if you would like information on

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the role of the Board or how to go about organising courses.

Venue hire and food costs increase and the contribution to U3A finances from the University has ceased. But we have been able to maintain the same course and membership fees for some years. I am pleased to inform members that the Board has agreed to keep the membership fee at \$20 and course fee at \$40 for 2014.

By the time you receive this newsletter the Series 3 courses for 2013 will have finished. On your behalf I thank the Programme Committee under the guidance of Sue Cathro, course organisers and presenters for their efforts in giving us such a vibrant and interesting programme for 2013. There were over 1100 participants over the three sessions.

On behalf of all members I thank Dame Norma Restieaux for her astute leadership of the Board during her year of office. Hearty thanks also to Judith Gray, the past Secretary for many years who retired from the Board at the AGM, along with Bill Wilson who organised a number of successful courses.

Have a warm and relaxing summer holiday.

• **'Meet the Chairman'**

- see page 2

Letting some more in the door

Jane Higham, Membership Secretary, reports that the U3A Dunedin waiting list for members stood at 267 people when we went to press. The Board decided last month to take 100 (those waiting longest) off the list and admit them to membership next year.

With the present membership of about 520 that should take our membership roll to 620. The Board will be watching for any problems arising. Our big waiting list will still be there and no doubt start growing again. This seems to be the penalty for U3A being so popular in the city.

Meet Brian Robinson, chairman of our U3A Board

Brian Robinson, now chairman of U3A Dunedin, is Emeritus Research Professor in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Otago. Educated at Christchurch Boys High School and the University of Canterbury, he is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand and the NZ Institute of Chemistry.

Brian has authored numerous chemistry articles, books and patents and undertaken research funded by granting agencies in the USA and Europe, as well as within New Zealand.

In 2011 he was awarded the Marsden Medal for services for

PROFILE

more than 40 years to national and international science. The medal recognises a lifetime of 'outstanding service to the cause or profession of science.'

He has recently been active in the development of smart polymers and medical applications of polymer gels; one of which may be seen as the 'Holy Grail' for endoscopic surgery. He also acts as an expert reviewer of international chemical research,

Brian has also been a scientific advisor on hazardous substances

and chemical weapons for various government and international agencies.

In commerce he is an active company director and was co-founder of Westchem Industries; manufacturer of export chemicals for fragrance, flavour and natural medicine industries for 25 years.

As a Rotarian he was awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship for community service. Brian is a keen walker, plays bridge, likes woodwork and model building.

Irish prescription

'A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctor's book.' ~ Irish Proverb

'Positive feedback' on the courses

We have had much positive feedback from members this year – both verbal and written. We are pleased that our work in facilitating and/or organising the 17 courses for 2013 has been appreciated.

This year we have also worked on updating the "Guidelines for Course Organisers" – a detailed description of how to go about organising a course, what is needed to be done and who can help to do that. If you have an idea for a course and would like to organise one, then these guidelines will be very helpful.

They include instructions for course assistants and what they can do to support the organiser during a course. We have also updated the "Protocols for the Programme Committee", so there are guidelines for us as well.



Sue Cathro

Programme Convenor

Other Programme Committee members are: Sue Harvey, Jane Higham, Doug Holborow, Rosemary Hudson and Marjan Lousberg. We are working towards organising a good choice of interesting courses in 2014. For Series 1, beginning in March, we have four courses confirmed – *Adventures in Art, History as Witnessed by the Family from*

Looking ahead

1450, *Saintly Lives* and a course from the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. Two other courses are being worked, so there will be six courses from which to choose.

Although planning for the rest of 2014 is in its early stages, we have firm proposals for both Series Two and Series Three for several interesting courses. More about them closer to the time. We are always interested in any suggestions.

We do take notice of what you put in the course evaluation forms and follow up those that we think will appeal to members. Suggestions can be made at any time, so please contact a Board member so that he/she can bring it to our meetings.

Sue Cathro

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Switched-on telephone chat?

Daughter: Dad, I'm in love with a boy who is far away from me. I am in Australia and he lives in the UK. We met on a dating website, became friends on Facebook, had long chats on Whatsapp, he proposed to me on Skype and now we've had two months of relationship through Gmail. Dad, I need your blessings and good wishes.

Father: Really? Well get married on Twitter, have fun on Tango, buy your kids on Amazon and send them cash through Paypal. And if you get fed up with your husband then just sell him on TradeMe or Ebay.

NEWS IN PHOTOS



Treasurer Bill George (left) recently donated surplus audio-visual equipment to Craig Bush, Anne Barsby and Lloyd Smith, of the Gasworks Museum Trust, just in time for it to be available for the Dunedin gasworks' 150th anniversary celebrations.



First aid instructor Paul Donovan (with mannequin) gave training lessons to some U3A Board members on how the defibrillator now stored in the Leith Bowling Club could be properly used.



2013 Burns Fellow David Howard reads Hone Tuwhare's poem *Rain*, at the official display last July of the Ralph Hotere banner it inspired. U3A paid for the large reproduction now hung in the Richardson Building. Dr Elaine Webster stands at left.

Warning: puny ways to punish

As the famous Fowler (*Modern English Usage*) once said, 'puns are good, bad and indifferent, and only those who lack the wit to make them are unaware of the fact.' The assumption that puns are *per se* contemptible is 'a sign at once of a sheepish docility and desire to seem superior.'

So the *Newsletter* now sees (or seizes) its power to punish you the readers . . .

There was a person who sent ten puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.

Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal? His goal: transcendental medication .

The midget fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.

The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.

A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.

I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.

She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.

A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.

A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police say they are looking into it.

Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.'

A vulture boards an airplane, carrying two dead raccoons. The stewardess looks at him and says, 'I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger.'

Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says, 'I've lost my electron.' The other says 'Are you sure?' The first replies, 'Yes, I'm positive.'

A backward poet writes inverse.

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