



U3A Tawa Incorporated

# ON COURSE Newsletter

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Website: <http://www.u3a.gargal.net>

Twitter: U3A Tawa @u3atawa

Email: [u3atawa@gmail.com](mailto:u3atawa@gmail.com)



U3A Tawa

## NEW HANDS ON THE U3A TILLER AFTER 2017 AGM

The AGM was marked by the departure from the Managing Committee of past (double term) Chairperson Brian Wilson and Treasurer Nicky Hamblin. Brian and Nicky were warmly thanked for their sterling work over many years. Brian himself paid tribute to Nicky's stewardship of the financial issues; especially her ability to devise economies which helped in keeping down the membership sub for so long. Brian is succeeded by former Membership Secretary, Michael Holland and Nicky by newcomer Jasmine Thompson.



### **Chairperson's greeting to all**

*Greetings to all our U3A Tawa members! It has been great to see so many of our members renewing their subscriptions for 2017, but also to welcome so many new members to our members list. By the time you read this, many of our courses will be under way! This half-year, we are offering 43 courses covering a wide range of topics.*

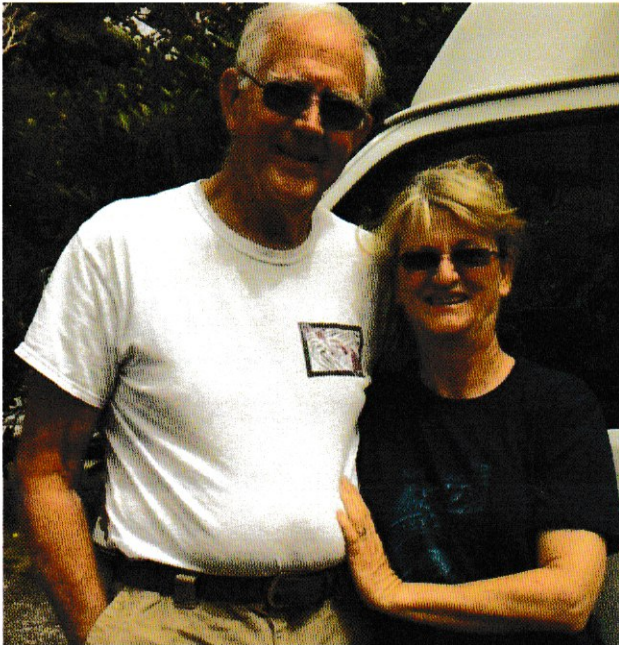
*We are always on the lookout for new courses, so if there is a subject you would like to see included, let us know. Even better if you can tell us of anyone who might be prepared to lead a new course. In the meantime, enjoy what we have on offer!*

*Michael Holland, Chairperson.*



**Brian Wilson and Nicky Lambie are thanked for their wonderful service**





## TWO 'SATISFIED CUSTOMERS' FROM USA

Americans Niels and Rebecca Christensen have been in New Zealand for just over two years. They live in Tawa. Niels hails from Beaufort SC while Rebecca started off in Utah. They met in Hawaii and have travelled extensively both overland and, by boat, across the Pacific. Between them they spent serious time in Mexico, Italy, Australia and Cuba with occasional spells back in the US. Niels is a highly experienced oceanographer (still with his own land survey company in the US) while Rebecca is more artistically inclined.

As Niels puts it "New Zealand was always on the horizon for us. Our daughter and grandchild are here so we finally made the big move." They have not been disappointed and have become suitably philosophical about the weather

here. Both are members of the U3A Current Affairs group that meets monthly and retain an abiding interest in the art and science of government. They consider the present confused world situation to be both troubling and challenging. Rebecca has also joined the U3A Singers.

"We had the best times in all human history, back in the States during the 1950s and 60s" says Niels. "Everyone pulled together - but it's been going wrong ever since. I consider myself a socialist in the best sense. My time in Cuba convinced me that people cheerfully working together for the common good, without resort to a strict socialist 'regime', is the way to go.

The Cubans had low living standards but they happily shared what they had and warmly welcomed us in. Every night they would meet on the beach in the cool of the evening to share food and music. Everyone was welcome. They were very uplifting times. The doctrinaire Cuban government was one thing but the generous people were quite another. New Zealand is the nearest we've seen to that sort of social inclusiveness since then.

We live next to a primary grade school and over the fence we hear kids really enjoying themselves in their play. That kind of childhood exuberance is waning in the States, where kids are increasingly subjected to indoor teaching styles and with playgrounds that no longer offer any excitement to them".

## GARDENING GROUP AT GEAR HOMESTEAD AND OHARIU RESERVE





# SOCRATES AT THE ROUNDABOUT

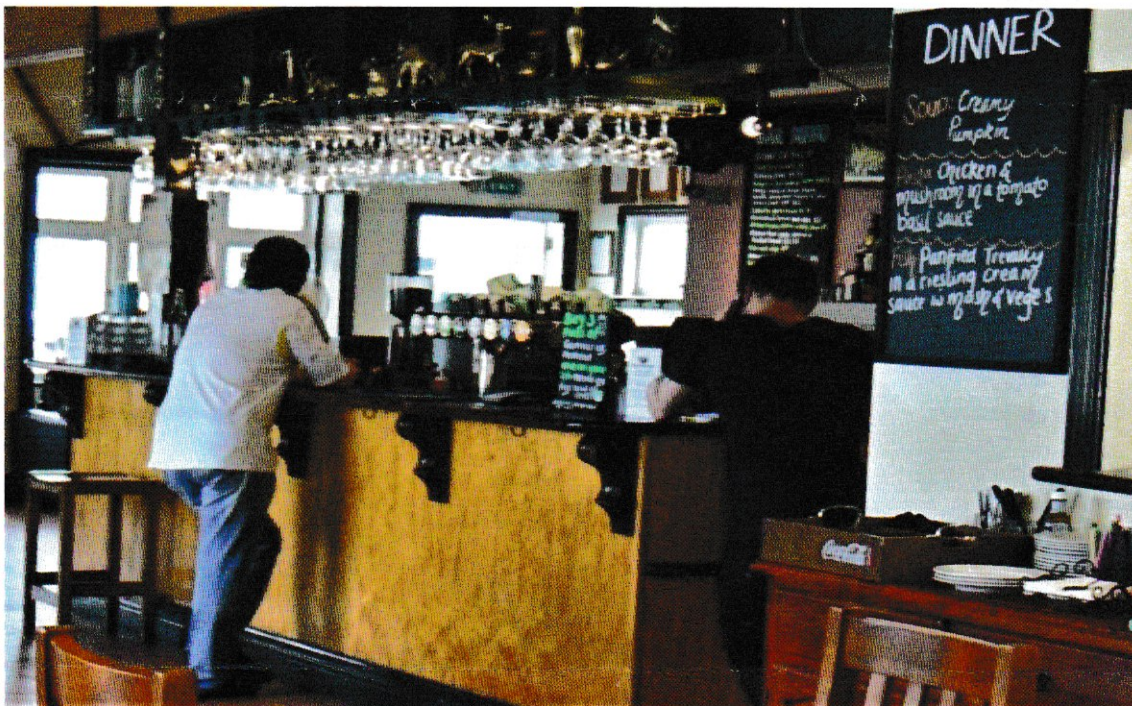
Whether you are armed with a handle of Guinness or a flat white, Don Hunter's course "*Talking with Socrates*" will always be challenging. We live in a world where robust debate has been watered down into spin and mediocre soundbites for those who, as it were, play intellectual T20 cricket.

The level of public discourse has probably never been lower, since many in public life never move out of their ambiguous comfort zones. With ever present social media less has undoubtedly become more. Society needs help from a man who lived 2500 years ago.

The course has six intrepid adherents and they are required to read a few short books that lie at the centre of Socrates' life and controversial death. Ironically, one of those works is the man's heartfelt and cogent justification of his own execution - rather than his leaving for safety abroad.

For Don, the first burning question is "Who is Socrates? How much of him is Plato (his often questionable amanuensis) and how true are the various translations we have to work with? That said there is more than enough of both philosophers to go round in order to make the group examine what it thinks and why. We are not meant to be apostles who buy into a firm creed. We merely use the tools that Socrates bequeathed us to critically analyse the big issues of life: our own convictions, what we believe about the real nature of truth, human equality, the value of our own lives and dozens of others.

The air may become heated with Socrates' passion for provocative and unrelenting argument but the Roundabout staff are unlikely to have to spread sawdust on the floors.



Editor: Dave Smith 04 232 5084 [dogsnake33@gmail.com](mailto:dogsnake33@gmail.com)  
Printing/Distribution: John Burke 04 232 4477 [johnburke@xtra.co.nz](mailto:johnburke@xtra.co.nz)

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