

ON COURSE Newsletter

December 2017 – No. 83

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SPRING INTO SUNSHINE

The annual **Spring into Tawa** event had a rather spotty record in the days when it was held three weeks earlier than this year's event. The weather seldom helped and strong winds frequently spoiled the day. Now mounted in late October SIT enjoyed one of the best October days in living memory and sunscreen was, at last, called for.

Sporting its new banner and a montage of photos of its various learning and social sessions, U3A Tawa was projected on a stall in the middle of a somewhat crowded Tawa Plaza - wedged incongruously between the National and Labour party stalls. Committee members took turns to (wo)man the stall and to give a living presence to an organization that does not have universal recognisability.

For four hours we were able to hand out pamphlets, course overviews and application forms to anyone who appeared to fit the main U3A demographic. It was noted that most people at the event tended to be in the 8 - 35 age range. Many of those we engaged in conversation turned out to already be U3A members.

This was a worthwhile appearance in the suburb on a special festive day; even though by its nature it wasn't an ideal forum in which to recruit for U3A. It is intended that, before long, such a stall will be erected for a full day near a local supermarket when we will be better able to target passers-by in smaller and more engageable groups.





Chairman's Christmas message

At the end of each year, the committee of U3A Tawa host a morning tea to acknowledge the many people who have contributed over the year as leaders or co-ordinators of the various groups and sessions.

U3A is a volunteer community organisation with a focus on members sharing their knowledge, skills, and experiences with each other. While we often include "outside" experts and professionals as speakers or presenters, the majority of our 'courses' are presented and co-ordinated by our own members. With 43 courses offered in both the first and second halves of the year, this represents a large number of people involved in offering these courses.

As the chair of U3A Tawa, I am full of admiration and gratitude for all those members who have given generously of their time and talents so that we can offer such a comprehensive and varied programme of courses.

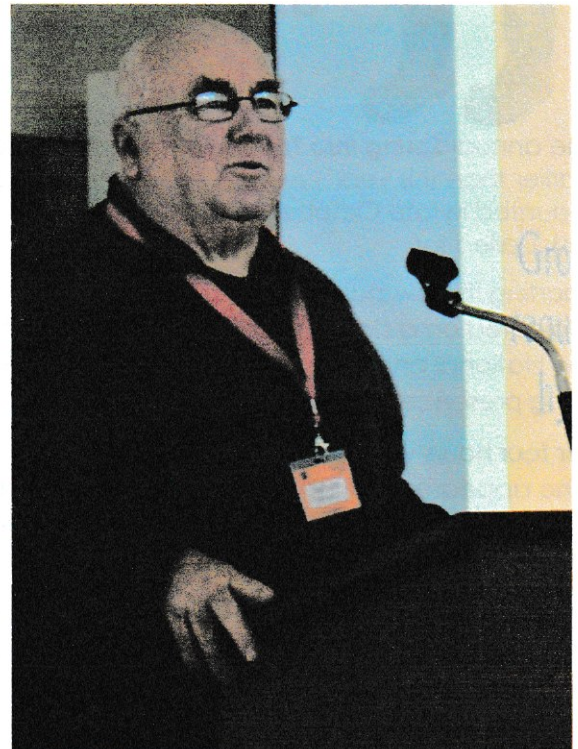
If there is a topic or subject which you would like to see included in our programme in the future, please let us know. Even better if you can offer to be the leader or presenter, or if you are prepared to offer your services as the co-ordinator of a group, series of presentations or a stand-alone session. The role of a co-ordinator is not necessarily very onerous, but is a vital function if our programmes are to run smoothly!

Thank you to all our members for being part of U3A Tawa this year. Registrations are now being accepted for next year – you don't have to wait until our January meeting to renew your membership! Also, if you have enjoyed being a member of U3A Tawa, you may have a friend or know someone who you could encourage to also join us.

With every good wish to you all for the festive season.

Michael Holland

Chair



Definitely Michael but no mike.

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

SMOOTHING OUR PATH

U3A Tawa is a conspicuously community-based effort. Most of the sessions are held in private homes or public spaces at no cost to members. However, a number of courses involve the use of enclosed community spaces such the Mervyn Kemp Library, the Tawa Community Centre, Doris Mills Lounge along with various church halls and rooms. These venues cater for everything from the larger singing groups to select indoor sports and art/language classes.

With the mix of sessions ever changing throughout the year that is no mean feat. It is one that can only be achieved by enthusiastic help and cooperation from the people who control these vital spaces.

Chris Piggott of WCC is the head spaceman (as it were). His formal title is Team Leader Libraries and Community spaces. Chris is very much aware of the presence of U3A in Tawa and is a strong supporter of it. He is keen to see all available spaces in the Library and Community Centre being used to the full by community organisations like ours.



Helping Chris in this most welcome pursuit are Mandy Russell at the Community Centre and Shelley Prowse a senior librarian at the Library. Through the efforts of the three of them, the two buildings are regularly used for U3A meetings and activity sessions; including the use of the large open space in the Community Centre for computer and art classes while ukulele and book clubs enjoy access to the large library tables. U3A publications like course booklets are also jointly on display there and it is possible for members to use the U3A drop box for leaving correspondence and payments.

The *New Books in the Library* course stems from a chance remark by Chris to the effect that such a session could have access to the "new books" shelves with six week loans (subject to any other library reserves) so that the books would be in early circulation and with user reviews of them being posted by the U3A group. On the day, Shelley has looked out various types of new books and goes through them with the class in addition to supplying a marvellous morning tea. (There is already talk of the Library being used to mount a commemorative team presentation around the 50th anniversary of the loss of the t.e.v. Wahine next April. The ideas are boundless.)

U3A Tawa thanks Chris, Shelley and Mandy (and the various Tawa churches) for their kindness, co-operation and encouragement in supporting our organisation. Their collective efforts are very much valued by us all. They help make our world go round!



SOME OF THE NEW COURSES IN 2017

There were seven new courses in the last half year and several of them will roll over into 2018 as they are finding favour with their many enthusiastic participants.

Three Chords for Christmas on the Ukulele led by Margaret Stenhouse has been a major hit. It is run in the Tawa Library and boasts five highly-motivated learners. "There were some very grim faces at the start as they struggled with the thought of ever playing this small instrument" recalls Margaret who, herself, can play well over twenty instruments; including harmonica and 12-string guitar. "After the initial pain comes that real pleasure when the class discovers that just a few common chords will unlock the music in hundreds of tunes for them. That wonderful sense of achievement is the real payoff for me".

A similar burst of enthusiasm and involvement is found in the *Building with Meccano* course run by Max George. Three men and one lady all equally keen are having "a great time" building what, at this stage, is usually something in the vehicles 'family' of Meccano. There is every expectation that the course will roll over to next year – hopefully with added members. Cars, planes, trucks are on the assembly line now. The Sydney Harbour Bridge will take a little longer (and a few more builders).



The *New Books in the Library* course is mentioned elsewhere. Dave Smith's other venture *Concepts of Law* can be said to have been worthwhile, too. Up to 10 course members came to a very demanding weekly session that evaluated the most fundamental concepts of law derived from Greece, Rome, Norman Britain, France and the USA (not to mention New Zealand itself) over 2,500 years. Law is the bedrock of any civilised society. It moderates all relationships between the governors and the governed. Some course members indicated that their personal perspectives on our current laws had changed significantly as a result of their studies. (It will be some time before this course will be offered again as it is both time and paper-intensive.)



MEMBER PROFILE: HELEN ROPER

A seven-year resident of Tawa, former science teacher Helen Roper is no stranger to the educative process. Helen comes from Taranaki originally and to U3A Tawa by way of VUW (Science honours degree) Canterbury (training college) and the BoP (20+ years after an initial country service stint). She also studied extramurally at Massey to complete a Dip Arts over a 5 year period in later years.

Helen married science teacher husband Gil, who began his own science teaching career at Tawa College in 1969 (later headed to NZQA), from where she retired in 2013 after 20 years. While working at our local College Helen authored a Masters paper from Otago Uni that addressed the law-related issues involved in using hazardous materials in school science areas. Parents nationally have much to be grateful to her for!

The College gave her a right royal send off with cupcakes that faithfully related the periodic table (see photo).

Helen is a courses stalwart in U3A being currently enrolled in Current Affairs, The Concept of Law, Gardening/Botany, Travel, Ancestry; being a Coordinator on two of those. *"I especially enjoy the law course, though it's very new to me, as it helps to pull threads together from both history and current events."*

Helen and Gil have five sons and many grandkids. They enjoy travel (North America and Africa just recently) and being with their extensive family. A member of Friends of Tawa Bush Reserve Helen is an avid reader and gardener. She values U3A hugely, noting that *"the various groups are very friendly and welcoming people."*



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF U3A TAWA INC

To be held at the Tawa Bowling Club, Davies Street Tawa on Monday 15 January 2018. Lunch will be served from 12.00 noon. Please bring a contribution towards the lunch. Items should be suitable for being eaten as finger food.

Savoury items (that can quickly be heated up in the Club kitchen) are preferred to sweet ones as we usually end up with a large surplus of cake. Health & Safety laws now prevent such surplus food being given away to other organisations so it has to be discarded. Annual subs for 2018 can be paid at the meeting but note comment (c) below.

Matters decided or noted at the U3A Committee meeting on 6 November 2017

- a. The half year meeting next year will not include lunch, but tea/coffee and biscuits will be provided.
- b. Changes in the layout of first half 2018 course booklets. In essence, the courses described will be put into two sections (hopefully with a different colour background). Section one will have the new courses and short (i.e. more than one session but no more than one semester) courses. Section two will set out the Continuing Courses - those that have been and will be on-going.
- c. The BNZ has, sadly, now gone from Tawa so subs cannot be paid into the U3A bank account there. If paying cash on 15 January, then please come to the meeting as early as possible. Members are urged to pay subs in advance either online or (ii) by cheque (only) at the TCC box (in the library if TCC closed). Pre-payment will ensure that your new U3A badge insert is waiting for you on 15 January.
- d. Coordinators' morning tea is on 26 November 2017 at the Union Church. U3A sincerely thanks all of the Coordinators for an essential job mightily well done.
- e. The cost of postage is now prohibitive so volunteer members now deliver your booklets and newsletters. It is very helpful if we can be advised of changes of address especially if a member is leaving the Tawa area. If you know of someone who has left (who may not have advised us) please free to tell a committee member.
- f. Broad financial position as at November. In round figures: Subs collected \$4,800. Hall hire contributions \$5,500. Income in excess of \$10,000. Costs include: Hall hire \$3,200, Printing \$2000, petrol vouchers for tutors \$500, postage (a mere) \$125. Expenses total \$6500 giving us a healthy working surplus. Formal accounts will be tabled at the AGM.

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Disclaimer: This newsletter is created for the interest of Tawa U3A Inc's members only. The writer and the executive make every effort to ensure that the information it contains is correct but take no responsibility for any inadvertent errors that might appear.