

U3A Tawa Incorporated



## ON COURSE Newsletter

December 2016 – No. 80

Website: <http://www.u3a.gargal.net>  
Email: [u3atawa@gmail.com](mailto:u3atawa@gmail.com)

Twitter: U3A Tawa @u3atawa  
Facebook: U3A Tawa

# LUNCH AND ANNUAL MEETING 2017

*The start-of-year lunch and Annual General meeting will be held on Monday 16 January 2017 in the Tawa Bowling Club, Davies Street TAWA. A pot luck 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. It would be appreciated if you could bring savoury rather than sweet. When you arrive your contribution will be transferred to platters and will be heated in the hall as required. Members with special requirements may bring whatever foods they need or prefer.

**Annual subscriptions are also payable at this meeting**

### SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR EVERYONE TO NOTE

U3A would like to continue to offer interesting courses or talks on topics of interest to our 336 members. Please give some thought to the following questions which we will raise at our January meeting.

1. What topics for future talks would you be interested in?
2. Do you have an interest or hobby that you would like to share with us? Can we please have your name and topic?
3. Would you be interested in being a Coordinator for one of our courses? Your role would be to ring and remind participants in advance of the meeting, keep attendance records, help set out the seats, etc.



## HALF-YEAR MEETING 9 JUNE 2016



The meeting was very well attended and provisioned. The highlight was the presentation of handsomely framed certificates of appreciation to founder members of U3A Tawa, Bev Johnson and Joy Chaplin, on the occasion of our 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. Joy related, with some affection, the dinners that were held to create a collegial sense of togetherness in the early days. One of them incorporated a multi-nation theme banquet where national flags were placed on tables. Joy still has those flags and displayed them to the gathering while she spoke.

Chairman Brian Wilson mentioned that we are looking for new Committee members for next year and beyond, so members should take steps to ensure that able people are made aware of that need. Since then there have been some very gratifying offers to serve from people who have already sat in on Committee meetings. At the AGM in January nominations will be called for all positions and willing volunteers are always welcome.

## NINETY SIX YEARS YOUNG – EDDIE ROBERTSON

If anyone ever embodied what U3A is all about, that person would be Eddie Robertson. A regular attender at the two Current Affairs classes Eddie is always right up with the play and makes many a pointedly valuable contribution to the discussion.

Eddie will quietly tell you that his name appears on the Honours board at his old College in two successive years; in which he was dux both times. That is because first time around he was too young to go to university - so he had to go round twice.

Becoming a top scientist Eddie soon found himself seconded to the British Navy in wartime along with the (now) late Sir Ernest Marsden; doing 'hush hush' work e.g. in the area of devising counter measures to magnetic mines. After his return to New Zealand Eddie rose to be the Director of the DSIR (now IRL) at Gracefield (and for those who go there now look out for the Robertson building.)

Eddie tells of how he tried in his term at the DSIR to promote science not only to the affluent areas of the world but also in the developing countries. If a DSIR rep was travelling in Europe they would find themselves directed to drop off somewhere in Africa on the way and seek out some socially useful projects for the smaller nations to get involved in with us.

He even tells of spending quality time with Margaret Thatcher during her visit here in 1976. "She was very impressed with the NZ approach to how government uses and funds science" he says. One of her team was constantly reminding her that she "had to be somewhere else" but once into the subject Mrs. T was not easily for turning. "She was a highly intelligent woman" Eddie recalls. She'd have to be.

Eddie loves the cut and thrust of ideas in the U3A classes. "You can say whatever you like!!" he exults with a cheeky grin. So he does.



# COMPUTERS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS OF TORTURE

## Talking with John Baldwin

It is becoming increasingly less acceptable to hide behind one's age when it comes to computer usage. NZ Post, banks, government generally and, of course, grand-children expect us to be able to receive emailed documents text messages, family photos and whatever. Banks now fully trust the security of the internet.

John Baldwin, U3A's ace in the hole on computers, has been chipping away getting more and more members into his computer tech classes that are based on the following:

1. *What do members really want?*

U3A can probably offer "anything" if there's a month or so to prepare information. What U3A can offer are sessions with familiar people who can share their many tech questions and "What I do" ideas.

2. The sessions can be "one off" e.g. iPads or text messaging.

3. The new budget-line smartphones can do so much (many have more advanced tech in them than the most recent US military planes!) Members can visit the Tawa Community Centre between 9.00am and 1.00 pm and use Welly Wi-Fi, internet access to get Skype contact "free"!

4. Pics taken with a phone can be up-loaded to a personal "Drop-box". (Kids can do that for grandchildren pics from Europe, giving Tawa oldies the link / permission to access (click on the icon) the Dropbox & see the pictures.

5. There are other ways too - Facebook that grannies (U3A members) can pop down to TCC once a week, say, and "see" pictures from the family "free". Who makes prints these days?



What U3A can offer is some 'one-on-one' guidance from folk that members already know (from other courses and socially).





Stupid computer  
keeps saying  
"you got mail"



The basic aim is to get more U3A members a bit "computer"/smartphone / tablet (iPad) savvy. As John puts it "I'm no geek! I just make my way as best I can now there are no IT guys to consult". Many members might have been put off computers when all that was available was expensive stuff that only introverted techos meddled with.

A modest-priced (about \$100) smartphone takes good photos, sends and receives phone calls, text messages, emails and attachments. They can hold a myriad of Apps - like Air NZ's one with your bookings. Folk can play games like solitaire, read anywhere, keep important phone numbers and addresses stored in their pocket. And you cannot damage it by using it!



## MEETING AND MORNING TEA TO THANK COORDINATORS

A meeting of all course coordinators (with a fine morning tea supplied) was held at the Union Church on 28 November 2016.



It was well attended and gave U3A Tawa the opportunity of thanking the many people who carry out the behind-the-scenes activities that make our local association function so smoothly.

In his last year as Chairman of the U3A Tawa Committee, Brian Wilson expressed his gratitude for the support that the Committee gets from members each year (including the excellent catering!) We are clearly fulfilling the objectives of the Constitution and are in good heart as we go into 2017.

Jancis Potter also spoke, as Courses Coordinator. She referred to the fact that U3A Tawa has a fine track record for making its various courses and events both relevant and interesting. She mentioned the fact that in addition to term-long courses we are also getting behind one-off, but valuable, health and lifestyle sessions such as garden design, annuities and reverse mortgages, and dealing with Alzheimer's from various perspectives. Also of major importance was the need for course coordinators as well as leaders.

Jancis stressed the need for courses on offer to be constantly refreshed to take advantage of the impressive skills and life experiences that reside within the U3A membership (*see the three survey questions on page 1*).

Overall, the message is to GET INVOLVED



## SINGALONG WITH FRANCINE

One of the hugely popular U3A classes is that offered every two weeks by Francine McGovern at the Baptist Church on Main Road in Tawa. The hour goes by very quickly as the class sings its way through a wide range of songs accompanied by Francine on electric keyboards and with the words on an overhead projector.



Singing your heart out is a wonderfully therapeutic thing. There is safety in numbers and there is no need to be trained singer. Community singing was all the rage in America in the 1950s, under the direction of the immortal Mitch Miller. It was observed at the time that a good old sing was a great way of taking your mind off the Cold War and the threat of nuclear destruction. Now that we have President Trump, radical climate change, rogue asteroids, shifting tectonic plates and the housing bubble

unrestrained vocalising may well be coming back with a bang.

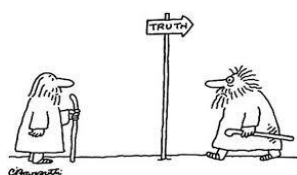
Anyone can suggest a song or two but in the average hour session Broadway, folk, pop, spiritual, Maori and many other song forms are visited and hugely enjoyed. That the class fields up to 30 members on a good day is proof of its enormous pulling power.



## AND FINALLY - A WHOLE NEW MEANING FOR "BOXING DAY"



The burgeoning cost of funeral caskets can be a very real burden on families. It also seems that deceased infants are often buried in something less than a proper casket or 'put in with someone else'. Increasingly, we are seeing the emergence of do-it-yourself casket-makers now collectively known as the Coffin Club. Their unique efforts reflect the personalities of those involved and provide a wonderful example of how New Zealanders get stuck into problems and find unique solutions. Maybe 2017 will see some U3A involvement for anyone interested.



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)

**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.