



Newsletter

September 2023

www.rotoruasenior.net

Member of NZ Federation of SeniorNet Societies

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From the Chairman

Hello, members

It seems that hardly a week goes by without hearing news about someone that has lost tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars to fraudulent investment schemes, often their whole life savings. There is a fairly common pattern, with people being duped by persuasive offers from apparently credible and trustworthy individuals claiming to represent some reputable financial organization.

One can only feel very sad for the people involved. It is easy to be critical and suggest that it was their own fault, and that they should have known better. We probably think that we would be too smart and suspicious to get caught like this. Unfortunately, many people are basically trusting and easily tempted. It has been surprising that even some apparently knowledgeable and astute people have been duped by these sophisticated scams. It is a warning to us all to be automatically suspicious and wary about any tempting approaches, particularly by phone or email. We need to remember the basic rule that if something seems too good to be true it probably is.

Of course, some scams are very amateurish and should fool nobody. For example, I recently received a text purporting to be from NZTA, telling me I had unpaid bills. There were three immediate red flags. I knew that I did not owe money to NZTA, the link that I was asked to follow was gibberish with no possible relation to NZTA, and the clincher was that the message was from an overseas phone number.

However, scams are not always that obvious. Scammers are getting more clever and scams are becoming harder to spot. The lesson is to be inherently constantly wary and suspicious.

Keep safe
Regards
Keith Garratt
Chair

Rotorua SeniorNet is just one of 75 local groups in the New Zealand Federation. If you would like to know more about what goes on elsewhere, OR what discounts or services are available to members, go to the Federation website.

www.seniornet.nz

Monday 4 September 2023

Our monthly members' forums are at Parksyde Centre, Tarewa Place, on the second Monday of each month at 2 pm, with interesting talks followed by afternoon tea. Visitors are welcome.

From Bert, Activities Co-ordinator

As long ago as 2019 our Rotorua SeniorNet committee had become aware that our members were no longer participating in our teaching programmes. We advertised upcoming courses with almost zero response. At that point we were still operating from Regency Park in a room with half a dozen computers and three printers. Some of the classes drew only a couple of participants and it was clear that a different approach was going to be required. An opportunity arose when Rotorua Library offered us the use of a sizable room which we were able to use to help Seniors from the general public who were having difficulty using their phones, tablets and laptops.

Events overtook us and the Covid pandemic reduced our activities to weekly zoom meetings. The SeniorNet national office, in conjunction with Google, established Google Hangouts, which also used Zoom meetings to provide classes and talks on a daily basis. Hangouts were open to the general public and operated for much of the pandemic. The second major event that precipitated a change in how we operated was the change of ownership of the Regency Park retirement village which meant that our computer room was no longer available.

Our first task was to place all of our computer room equipment into storage whilst we decided where we were going from here. Library "Drop In" sessions began in a small way and during the current year have become very, very popular. It is very rewarding to go into that room on a Monday morning and see it literally humming with activity.

A further opportunity presented itself at the Parksyde Community Centre where, with support from Age Concern, we were able to rent a room on Tuesday mornings to present a series of talks which are open to the general public. These talks were initially aimed at removing the mystery from mobile phones. People were encouraged to bring their own devices to the meeting. After a short talk and demonstration where the tutor's phone was projected onto a large smart TV everyone broke into smaller groups where they could practise on their own devices with help from SeniorNet members who were there to answer questions and to give advice when required. These talks, which run for eight weeks or so, have proven to be very popular and we hope to continue with another series later on this year.

Parksyde also provides the venue for our monthly Social Forum which has also adapted to our new circumstances. The format is much the same but the presentations are not so much about computer technology. We try to cover new developments or useful apps. Some of our members spend a lot of time down the "YouTube" rabbit hole and frequently come up with some hilarious or otherwise interesting snippets which we can show on the large TV screen.

After the meeting we move into the cafeteria for tea/ coffee and a biscuit. This provides an opportunity for our members to mix and mingle and get to know each other.

As a result of the activities mentioned above the number of members registered with the club is slowly climbing back to pre-Covid levels. Participation in our monthly Social Forum at Parksyde is at a reasonable level for any events which take place for the winter months. We anticipate that the numbers will grow as the weather improves in the spring.

The next phase of our return to the new normal is to build up our administration team. We have a small, dedicated committee, but we do lack back-up people for most of the jobs. We would like to see volunteers to understudy our club secretary and our treasurer to name two specific tasks. We need to increase the numbers in our Monday “drop in” team. Most of the problems we deal with do not require a deep knowledge of any of the devices. The skills most used are the ability to listen and sort out the nature of each problem. Some you may be able to deal with from your own experience. Some you can check with Doctor Google and get an answer. When you just plain cannot help you can ask someone else in the team to give you a hand. The greatest advantage of being on the team is the amount of things you learn yourself whilst helping other people.

Should you feel that you can help out we would be really pleased to hear from you.

Bert

FYI/FYE (For Your Information/From Your Editor)

A bit bitsy this month, from me. There’s been a few things floating around in my head that need to be put down on ‘paper’. First came the article in NZ Herald about ‘helicopter parenting’ and the damage it can do when children and young people are not allowed to make mistakes and learn from them. I totally agree. What comparison is there between a few scrapes and bruises as a child and a major car crash caused by an undisciplined, doped/drunk teen?

Then came the All Blacks’ loss to the Springboks! National tragedy! Day of mourning! No, week of mourning! Nothing more to say on that one. I’m not a rugby fan.

I’ve also noticed, as an administrator for a national sports body, that people just love to alter the forms that are online. Apparently, they think their layout is better, and never mind the person receiving them who has to contend with a different version from every club! Maybe we need to go back to the ‘old’ days when they could download and print the form, but had to fill it in manually and then send it through the post. Then, of course, people like me would have to interpret the hand-writing!

After that came the ultimate (for me) – NZ Herald online edition. Why, oh why do we have to have all those ads flickering on and off, up and down, in and out? That’s just great when the vision is not the best!

Gosh, what a whinge! Maybe I’m watching too much *Mike and Molly* (4.30 pm on TVOne – it’s so awful that I can’t stop looking). On the whole, though, I think I need a dose of what’s just around the corner – SUMMER! It must be close – my back yard and driveway are covered in dead camellias and



the local tui is loving it. My lachenalias, violets, freesias and dendrobiums (dendrobia??) are flowering beautifully and the strawberry plants are taking off. The weather's warmed up a little so it's time to start planning some more planting. I might have a try at cucumbers this year, despite all my past failures with them, plus my usual tomatoes, peas/beans, lettuce, mint (who can't grow that??), parsley, chives ...

One thing I really like doing in the garden is growing pumpkins. When I buy a nice pumpkin (or piece of one), I save the seeds by wrapping them in a paper towel and keeping them in a dry spot. In spring, they just get scattered around the edge of the vegetable garden and left to fend for themselves. Usually, I get about four pumpkins that can be distributed amongst the family as well as making pumpkin soup, and roasting (and freezing) one.

By the way (BTW), DAYLIGHT SAVING starts on 24 September, running until 7 April.

Ngairé

Check Your Junk/Spam Mailbox Regularly **by Alan Armstrong**

Keep an eye on your Spam or Junk folder, as legitimate emails can be sent there for several reasons:

- You may have errors in your email client's Mail Rules or Spam filters. The commonest of those is a block on emails that aren't from an address on your Contacts list. If any of those change their address, the new one will be treated as junk.
- You might have used "block sender's domain" when you meant "block sender." If that was <sender>@xtra.co.nz all emails from Xtra users will be treated as junk.
- You may have enabled "Only allow emails from my whitelist" and forgotten to update the list.
- Your email client or ISP may have added new spam defences to meet new threats. Over 80% of email traffic is now spam so ISP's work hard to remove it early in the delivery chain. So be very careful what you block - your email client might do much more than you intended. And scrutinise your block and safe lists regularly for errors.

Since the SeniorNet Federation and SeniorHangouts centralised their email services and Learning Centres all got standardised addresses, that's been happening to those emails quite often. The remedy is to put seniornet.nz and seniorhangouts.nz in your Safe Senders' List. Marking one email from each as "not Junk" also works.



If an email in your Spam folder isn't junk, right-click it then choose "Mark as not junk" or similar and it should reappear in your Inbox where you can deal with it normally. That should also whitelist its sender for future emails. Remember it won't be at the top of the Inbox list.

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