



Newsletter

February 2022

www.rotoruasenior.net
Member of NZ Federation of SeniorNet Societies

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From the Chairman

Dear members

I had hoped that by now, I could be giving you good news about our programme for 2022. Unfortunately, Covid has intervened again, and we are once again in a position of confusion and uncertainty.

As I write this, it is still unclear what will happen over the next few weeks or months. However, given the dire predictions about the spread of the Omicron variant in the near future, it seems that we must be very cautious. As we are a group of older people, we need to take seriously the warnings about the vulnerability of the elderly, and the advice to self-isolate as much as possible.

Your committee will shortly be meeting via Zoom to discuss where we go from here. I see little chance that we can safely resume gatherings and drop-in help sessions in the near future. We will consider whether we can make more use of online learning locally to help our Rotorua members. Our AGM is scheduled for 21 February, and it is likely that we will try to run this wholly or partly online. We will advise details nearer the time.

On the bright side, the Federation is re-launching and expanding the SeniorNet Hangouts online learning programme. Details are provided elsewhere in this email. We encourage you to take advantage of this.

Lastly, our efficient secretary Rob Grant is retiring, and we need a replacement. We would really appreciate it if someone could take on this task. Feel free to phone me on (07)357 2020 if you would like to volunteer or if you have any suggestions.

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.rotoruasenior.net

Next members' forum
Monday ??? 2022
2 pm

Our monthly members' forums are (usually*) 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.

***Hopefully, coming back to us soon! Stay tuned, people!**

And keep an eye out for details of the AGM.



From Bert, Activities Co-ordinator

Recently, friends we have known for many years decided to move to a retirement home from their three bedroomed house. This is quite a common activity these days for people of our age. However, they did find that moving into a smaller unit required that they needed to get rid of a lot of their possessions. So, after some negotiating with the "Salvation Army", "Women's Refuge" and a few other charitable organisations, they managed to reduce their possessions to fit into their new accommodation. They also managed to fill a couple of rubbish skips and their adult offspring also became early beneficiaries of the family estate.

This was quite a major operation and the message came over loud and clear that we could save ourselves a lot of trouble in the future. We decided to start in a small way by going through all our things one drawer or cupboard or bookshelf at a time and asking the question, "Do we really need this?". Our hallway is now full of all kinds of stuff that we plan to get rid of when we get around to it.

My contribution was to clear out our computer room and Gene has already been kind enough to relieve me of all kinds of cables and adaptors and all of the stuff that we collect over the years as technology moves on. Over the years we have collected a couple of filing cabinets full of A4 sheets of receipts and bank statements, rates demands, medical records, product warranties, motor vehicle documents and all of the other official documents generated by district councils and government departments, et al.

In case you were wondering what all of this has to do with computers and computing, I am about to explain. It has finally dawned on me that 99.9% of the paper records can be shredded. (I always shred personal documents rather than throw them away in the rubbish bin. I am paranoid, I know, but it does give me peace of mind.)

I am working my way through the filing cabinets a folder at a time. I am thankful that I have the skills to create a filing system that allows me to keep any document that is important enough to keep for reference in a folder system that allows me to recover the item easily when required.

I have noticed that over the years local councils, banks and government departments have kindly offered to distribute all correspondence by email and I have religiously ticked the necessary boxes but these organisations continue to send paper copies! I did note, however, that RLDC did send my last rates demand by email but I still expect the flood of pamphlets and notifications to continue.

Everything in the previous paragraph relies on the skills of scanning and saving those important documents. Most printers these days have a scanning function built in and I personally do much more scanning than printing.

A further absolute must is to back up your data regularly because by definition if you have saved it to your computer it is important enough to require a safe back up system. In the past I have used USB sticks and/or external hard drive. (A couple of terrabytes goes a long way.) These days however we have the option of using the "Cloud" to save our data in the great server farms that are not in the sky. New Zealand seems to be an ideal place to set up server farms and Auckland and the South Island are currently in the planning stage for such projects. Should you be worried about your data being stored offshore it should not be too long before you can choose to store it here.

Bert Harris

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

One Way Technology Has Changed Everyday Life

A couple of months ago I read a letter in a newspaper that made me think. It was from a pensioner, who was complaining about the demise of cheques. More recently, I read an article in the local paper which included a comment from a parent that ‘there should be a shade sail’ over the new playground at the lake front.

These two articles set off a train of thought about resilience and plain, old common sense. One of my grandmothers never wrote a cheque in her life. The other had worked as a bookkeeper and did the office work for my grandfather’s business, writing cheques on a daily basis. Nana, who used cash exclusively, was always chirpy (and quirky!) and bustling. Grandma, who wrote cheques, was serious and more critical. Their respective outlooks reflected their lives. Nana – carefree, pay cash, enjoy the day. Grandma – ruled by routine and deadlines. Strangely enough, both had a good bit of Irish in the genes. Grandma also had Scottish ancestors – I wonder what that says? Now we have older people who are still bemoaning the loss of cheques, but when I looked at my chequebook that is still sitting in Grandma’s old desk, I haven’t written a cheque since 2018 and that was for someone who hadn’t set up electronic banking. The one before that was 2016.

Some people still worry about the security of handling their finances online, but let’s face it, men were known to drop their wallets out of their back pocket and ladies could open their purse at the wrong time and see the week’s housekeeping money literally go down the drain! It’s really up to the individual – don’t share your passwords and check on your bank accounts regularly.

Having said that, when my father was 96, he finally admitted that he was losing track of his bills – there was only one by that time, the telephone, as he was in full time hospital care, but he was forgetting to pay it, writing the cheque incorrectly, forgetting to post, etc. At that stage, he asked me if I would handle his money and I agreed. All I had to do was to visit a branch of the bank and provide the documentation they asked for. Because Dad was in a care home and well looked after, they simply phoned him to ensure that was acceptable, asked him a few security questions and it was done. I only had to write three or four cheques for the telephone before he died and it probably helped that we both had life-long histories with the ASB, but it all worked smoothly.

On the other side of this train of thought was the current ‘... somebody should ...’ attitude. The shade sail! What’s wrong with being personally responsible for the offspring? Teach them to use sunscreen and when is/is not a good time to be out in the sun anyway! That’s my gripe for the month. 😊

Enjoy the current hot, dry weather. It won’t be long before we’re all moaning about the cold!

Committee and Tutor Contact Details

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