

Contents

This Page

From the Chairman

Page 2

Next Meeting

From Bert, our Course
Co-ordinator

Page 4

Our Sponsors

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From the Chairman



Hello members

The end of the year has crept up on us. As usual, SeniorNet Rotorua will be taking a break over the holiday period. Some key dates are:

- Monday 7 December: Last library Drop-in Tech Assistance session for 2020.
- Wednesday 9 December 2 pm: End-of-year Christmas gathering and afternoon tea at Regency Park.
- Monday 18 and 25 January: Library drop-in sessions.
- Monday 1 and 8 February: **Public holidays, so no library drop-in sessions on those days.**
- Wednesday 10 February: Members' Forum and Annual General Meeting, Regency Park.
- Monday 15 February: Library drop-in sessions recommence.

It seems likely that 2021 will bring some changes in the way that we operate. The National SeniorNet Federation is developing a promising system of online classes, and I imagine that we will be focusing on encouraging and enabling our members to use these and get the most from them, perhaps with guidance from our own tutors. We will also continue to support members with their individual problems and questions.

On a sadder note, we record the death of longstanding member Rosemary McMillin. Up until quite recently, she was a very enthusiastic attender of classes, taking every opportunity to learn about a wide range of subjects.

We hope to see you all at our end-of-year celebration on 9 November. We are aiming for a relaxing afternoon of entertainment, socialising and good food after what has been a difficult year for us all. We can just be thankful that we live in a country that has coped with the Covid 19 crisis better than just about all other countries.

Best regards and compliments of the season.

Keith Garratt
Acting 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 web site .

www.seniornet.co.nz

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING

Wednesday, 9 December 2 pm at Regency Park.

Remember to bring URL (link/address) for your favourite YouTube clip – up to 5 minutes

Christmas afternoon tea included at no charge



From our Course Co-ordinator, Bert

LOOKING TOWARDS 2021

It is that time of year again when I would imagine that everyone is beginning to look forward to 2021. With the new year we have the hope of restoring some normality to our lives.

SeniorNet Rotorua has had an interesting 2020, in which everything was new and almost nothing was normal. The sudden presence of this new thing, “Covid-19” presented a whole bunch of problems in our everyday lives which also loomed large in our SeniorNet lives. A lot of decisions needed to be made concerning how we could operate when our members were confined to their homes for an indefinite period and, furthermore, they were the most vulnerable age group in terms of the consequences of becoming infected.

At this point I must make a special mention of our acting chairman, Keith. I am sure that his guidance through this whole episode made a huge difference to how things played out as the weeks rolled by. It soon became obvious that many business enterprises, both large and small, were using the Zoom app to keep their employees in touch and working from home.

Our combined knowledge of how Zoom operated was just about zilch, so we downloaded the app and spent many mirthful hours getting our heads around the fact that we were on the “tele” - “sort of”. Never to be forgotten was John’s head appearing and disappearing from the Northern Lights virtual background he was displaying. Together, we worked our way through a whole series of software and hardware problems until we could have a reasonably uneventful meeting as far as the technology was concerned.

What we did discover was that working through the problems as a group was a really rewarding experience. We met on Zoom every day through the lockdown and we found out a great deal about each other and that we really enjoyed each other’s company. Every day for an hour or so we shared our sometimes-bizarre experiences that resulted from being confined to our homes with little contact with the rest of humanity. We had a lot of laughs and I am sure that it kept some of us sane.

Eventually, lockdown ended and everyone breathed a sigh of relief as we dropped down to Level 3. We had a little more freedom, but many seniors were still in ultra-careful mode as they gingerly went about their lives registering their visits to the local shops with their mobile phones.

SeniorNet started up a weekly social meeting on Zoom which is still happening. Using our website and email we encouraged our members to log in to the Tuesday meeting and basically watch what was happening and joining in if they so wished. Anyone who was having any difficulty could go to a virtual break-out room to have a completely private session with Gene ironing out any problems, which usually proved to be problems with the hardware. Zoom is not difficult to use and it is great for communicating with family members who may be living some distance away or even overseas.

Our club's financial year rolls over in June and reality took hold when we realised that our membership numbers had dropped by roughly 50%. Our membership has been slowly declining for quite a while and it seemed that the Covid epidemic had somewhat speeded up that process. We have been aware that the original reasons for the formation of SeniorNet no longer exist. People carry mini-computers in their pockets and handbags. They call them mobiles. Many of us have either an iPad or Android tablet which is also a computer, but without the phone function. Laptops and desktop computers still exist but their users are usually pretty computer literate. As a result of this the demand for our traditional classes has fallen to close to zero.

Our response to all of this change has been made with a co-operation with Rotorua Library where we are allowed to use one of their public rooms to hold drop-in sessions where people can bring their devices and talk through a problem with one of our technical crew who each has his/her particular expertise. We have a number of people who can cover the topics that arise due to the sheer variety of ways of delivering the IT technology that has emerged in the past few years. This has proven to be very popular and we are reaching a wider population, but it is not increasing our membership.

Our latest venture will be to use the power of Zoom to run talks or drop ins. This could involve other SeniorNet clubs around the country and we are still working on the concept. The biggest hurdle is to find something which catches people's imagination and in which they would really want to participate. A lot of work goes into producing even a one-hour teaching session and if it all comes to nothing it is quite a let-down for the tutor involved.

Attendance at our most recent monthly forum was encouraging, bearing in mind the lengthy time gap when meetings were not able to be held. It is apparent that people do enjoy the social aspect of the club.

Our newsletter reaches all our members and I wondered if we are taking enough advantage of this for everyone to have their say about things that are happening in computer land. Some of the difficulties arise from the increasing number of organisations that can only be contacted via the internet. Alternatively, it is good to hear about interesting or useful apps or websites you may have discovered. It is your newsletter so use it to bring these and other matters out into the light of day.

In conclusion I will take the opportunity to offer to all of our members best wishes for the Christmas season and an earnest hope for a better New Year.





OUR SPONSORS



Committee and Tutor Contact Details

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