

# **NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF GRADUATE WOMEN (Inc)**

## **WELLINGTON BRANCH**

**PO Box 2006, Wellington, 6140**

### **Newsletter July 2011**

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If you would like to be on our email list please send your email address to [gjfuller@clear.net.nz](mailto:gjfuller@clear.net.nz)

## **Invitation to midwinter lunch**

On Sunday 17 July, 12pm, at Wellington Study Centre – 31 Hobson Crescent, Thorndon.  
(Car parking is available close to the Centre)

Following lunch we will have the pleasure of a Comedy One Woman Show

## **“Fined”**

Performed by **Barbara Thompson**

It will also be an opportunity to hear from some of our scholarship winners who will be presented with certificates.

Friends and potential members warmly welcomed - \$25.00 per person

Please use the attached form to make your booking. Email recipients will be receiving the lunch and subscription forms in a separate file.

## **STUDY GROUPS**

### **Literature**

**Convenor: Helen Richards**

**Ph 476 6726**

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July** at 2:30pm at the home of Helen Richards, 38 Beauchamp St Karori. Please Ph 476 6726 with regrets. We are discussing books OTHER than our "set books" for the year - winter reading, with 5 -10 mins per person.

### **English Language**

**Convenor: Helen Richards**

**Ph 476 6726**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July** will be our mid-winter lunch at 12 noon. We will probably go to "Han River" in Lower Hutt, a Korean restaurant we have visited before. Helen Richards will confirm this arrangement by email or phone in 10 days' time.

### **Hutt General Interest**

**Liaison: Jennifer Coote Ph 569 8092, [g.coote@clear.net.nz](mailto:g.coote@clear.net.nz)**

**Kapiti Coast Group**

**Contact: Rosemary Petherick**

rpetherick@clear.net.nz ***Autism- How Can You Help***

Karen Brady, the Wellington Branch support co-ordinator for Autism NZ Inc, was the speaker at the June meeting. She represents a not-for-profit organisation with 12 active branches throughout the country. Autism affects 40,000 people in New Zealand and more males than females have the condition. Around 500 families are involved in Wellington. Autism NZ offers support, advice, training courses and liaises with other agencies.

Autism is a neurological difference not a mental illness. It is life-long with no cure, but there are strategies and therapies that can help. It is a spectrum condition with a wide range of combinations. Typically it affects social communication so that people may have difficulty with social situations, verbal and body language. They may prefer sameness and predictability and may have a systemising rather than empathising mind-set.

Diagnosis places emphasis on three impairments:

- social communication where the person takes a literal approach, may only hear parts of sentences or words, may talk incessantly about one subject and have difficulties with turn taking.
- social interaction where the unwritten rules of behaviour are not understood, normal social cues are missed, and eye contact is avoided.
- inflexibility of thought, imagination and behaviour, with a strong reliance on predictable routine.

Aspergers is a term used to describe people who manage to function reasonably well but have aspects of autism which can cause the stress and anxiety that can lead to meltdowns and loss of temper.

However, many of the traits associated with autism are also present in people who have had great success. Einstein, Mozart, Bill Gates and Alan Turing all display aspects of Aspergers Syndrome. Loyalty, honesty and a strong work ethic are much admired. Careers in the computer world often require the degree of detail and memory that can be features of autism.

How can we help? Many students have great intelligence but poor ability to deal with the requirements of social interaction. Could you mentor a student, or offer a home away from home so that the student could have a haven from their flat or hall or of residence? Mothers may need support in managing the needs of their special child. Could you be an ear for them or the child? At the simplest level it would be an advantage to raise awareness of autism and combat ignorance and exclusion.

Questions from the floor covered these issues;

1. Autism is genetic but there are other factors which affect where people are on the spectrum (most people have one or more elements of autism in their makeup – but you need the three key symptoms to be diagnosed as autistic).
2. You can't change someone who is autistic. All that you can do is to help them to cope.
3. The term Aspergers is being phased out and being replaced by acknowledging that people are in different places in the autism spectrum. No two autistic people are the same
4. If someone with autism decides they don't like you, they will never like you, and there is nothing you can do about this.
5. Another key message is that autism falls outside the mental health and, often, the special education spheres, as those with autism are generally not mentally ill. It is very hard for parents of autistic children to get diagnosis and support.

Here is the website for the Wellington branch [www.autismnz.org.nz/Branches/Wellington](http://www.autismnz.org.nz/Branches/Wellington).

## ***Branch Notices***

**Subscriptions: Please note the 2011-12 subscriptions are now due. A form is included with this Newsletter, or has been sent in a separate file to email recipients.**

### **Academic Dress**

Graduand Loraine Elliot sent this message to the Academic Dress team. "Just wanted to pass on my thanks to all involved in the gown hire etc. The ladies (and men?) involved were fantastic and

most helpful both before the ceremony and after. They were obviously well practiced and experienced, however they were friendly and most approachable as well. Please pass on my thanks and appreciation. The day was fantastic, and the dress hire people added to the whole occasion.”

### **Katherine Mansfield Public Lecture Series, A Literary Life**

The second talk in the series is about inspiration or seduction entitled *Young women and sexual change in Edwardian and interwar England*. It will take place at The Wellington Bridge Club, 17 Tinakori Road, Thorndon on Wednesday. 27th July from 12:30-1:20pm. Speaker: Dr Hera Cook, Lecturer in Modern History, University of Birmingham, UK. COST: Members Free. Non- members \$5 per session. Reservations: 473 7268 or email [kmbirthplace@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kmbirthplace@xtra.co.nz)

A special series of lectures **About Sport** will take place on 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th August. They are: Sport as Religion (Prof. Paul Morris and Dr Michael Grimshaw): Sport as Culture (Dr Jock Philips and Neil Plimmer): Sport as Identity (Dr Simon Kelly and Prof Roger Robinson): Sporting Women (Prof. Charlotte MacDonald and Melissa Moon).

Venue, Time, Cost and Reservation Details as for the Public Lecture Series above.

### **Did you know this?**

- In a recent survey 1 in 6 New Zealanders said they were having difficulty managing their money.
- New Zealanders were aware that they had to manage debt but did not know how.
- Young people, 18-24, had the greatest difficulty, but those over 65 also felt that they had inadequate strategies.
- Women as a group were more likely to admit limited knowledge than men.
- Few people had financial buffers for critical life-points.
- And from the Retirement Commissioner, the good news that we are reducing our debt. In 2007 we owed \$1.10 per dollar and that is now reduced to .95c per dollar.
- But, of the 5 million credit card debt only 3 million will be paid off monthly. Most people are unaware of the true cost of paying only the minimum amount required on a credit card debt. The Retirement Commission is campaigning to get credit card statements to show this cost.

These are random points made at the recent Financial Literacy Conference held by the Retirement Commission. Look on the website [www.financialliteracy.org.nz](http://www.financialliteracy.org.nz) for more information. And if you want some amusement on a wet day check out the financial profiler on [www.sorted.org.nz](http://www.sorted.org.nz).

### **Budget 2011**

The Budget of May 19 was the toughest one for many years. There is no doubt that the government's financial situation is challenging, made even more so by the necessity of supporting Christchurch and its eventual rebuild, and that difficult decisions have to be made. However, Budgets are about political choices (you will recall that one of last year's Budget choices was to lower tax rates and raise GST – the 'tax switch'). There are two Budget 2011 decisions to reduce available funding that I think will be of great interest to FGW members:

- ↪ *Student Loans*: There were a number of changes, including removing loans for living and course costs for people aged over 55 and removing the course-related cost component of student loans for part-time full-year students. These changes will affect women students, many of whom come to tertiary education as mature students, and many of whom can only do part-time study because of family commitments.
- ↪ *Adult and community education*: there is a further cut of \$4.5 million for ACE, which will again limit the access of women to study.

(Christine Ross, PAC)

**NCWNZ National Executive meeting** will take place in Wellington on 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>

September 2011. The following remits will be discussed. The wording has been abbreviated - please contact our representatives, Wendy Zemanek or Judy Whitcombe if you would like more information, and if you have views on any of these issues. *Wendy and Judy would really like to hear from you.*

### **NCWNZ Executive meeting - Remits**

1. NCWNZ urges the government to review the policy on national standards in primary and intermediate schools.
2. NCWNZ urges the government to reinstate funds previously available for the Tupu Pacific Language series.
3. NCWNZ calls on the government to implement a financial transaction tax on financial trades.
4. NCWNZ urges the government to require NZ chocolate manufacturers to verify that their imported beans are certified free from child labour
5. NCWNZ urges the government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities.
6. NCWNZ urges the government to develop policies and procedures for the specific needs of women prisoners in transition to the community.

### **NZFGW Executive News**

The latest issue of this Newsletter contains a moving article from the Rebecca Bear who received the 2010 Susan Byrne award for women who are making a career change. Rebecca has moved from being a veterinarian to neonatal researcher and educator. She was inspired to do this by her personal experiences after two of her three children were born prematurely and in a critically ill condition. Her story has been made into a documentary which is due to go to air in September. She is making good progress with her postgraduate diploma and expects to finish at the end of 2013.

**Our National President, Dot Page**, has also written about the need to change the governance structure of our organisation. Please consider her views on [www.nzfgw.org.nz](http://www.nzfgw.org.nz).

### **UNANZ 2011 Conference**

A few of the points made during panel discussions at the 2011 conference of UNANZ:

- “people living in poverty should have a space and a place at the United Nations” - Vicki Soames
- “some have said ‘MDG’ stands for ‘Minding Development Gaps’ - Sarah Morris
- “the region has the lowest percentage of women in parliaments of any region in the world” - Beryl Anderson
- “support for family planning in the region has diminished as demand has increased” - Branwen Millar
- “advice to aid donors: “listen, don’t preach” - Edna Tait
- “Pacific island countries are not very poor, they are very rich with largely unexploited seabed resources” - Wren Green
- “it’s time to realise that current notions of sovereignty are out of date and there needs to be genuine pooling of resources – including the movement of people” - Graham Hassall
- “and New Zealand itself has to pay better attention to the legitimate rights of migrant workers brought to this country, some of whom live and work in atrocious conditions” – Peter Conway  
(UNANZ June News)

### **Membership**

We welcome new members : Pamela Tregonning BSc(Hons), a retired Secondary School Teacher; Liesl Nunns D Phil in Classics, Greek and Latin; and Pauline Bolland BSc(Hons), an Occupational Therapist and Researcher.

(*Sylvia Findlay Rawle, Membership Secretary*).

**Communications:** Please send information for the next Newsletter to Jean Fuller, [gjfuller@clear.net.nz](mailto:gjfuller@clear.net.nz), or 2 Homewood Crescent, Karori, Wellington, 6012. Email is preferred. Deadline for the next newsletter

is 8 days after the branch meeting.