

# **Annual Report of the National President to 30 Sept 2002.**

## **The Theosophical Society in New Zealand (Inc.) National Presidents Report For the year ending 30 September, 2003**

The last twelve months have seen the New Zealand Section continue with the work of the past but also begin with some new initiatives which we hope will strengthen our members' and Lodge's understanding of Theosophy. It is through the strength of the individuals within our Society that we will grow in strength. What follows is a summary of these activities for the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2002 to 30 September 2003.

### **Convention 2003**

We were fortunate to have as our guests John and Adele Algeo who flew from India to be with us for our annual convention, which was hosted by our newest and fastest growing branch in Oamaru. John gave superb presentations, highlighting the stories of Frodo and Harry Potter as the archetypal spiritual journeys we are all taking. Many of our members also gave of themselves by way of talks, discussions, workshops or simply ensuring we were well fed and that our body's needs were well cared for. A special thanks goes to the President and members of Oamaru Lodge who made the stay so enjoyable and worked tirelessly to see that all were catered for. John also spoke with Kim Hill on National Radio while in New Zealand, an interview that was well received and generated considerable interest amongst the public.

### **"Theosophy in New Zealand"**

The Section's Magazine continues to be well received by the members, under the editorship of Hugh Dixon. The quality of the articles make this a valuable front for our Section and gives our members a good feel for some aspects of the Theosophical World. The extra four pages have allowed us to integrate the HQ newsletter into the magazine, making it a more informative Magazine for all members and a way to keep them informed with the happenings of the Section.

### **School of Theosophy**

This year we hosted our first 7-day school in late February at the Tauhara Centre on the shores of Lake Taupo. Our guest speaker was Ravi Ravindra who spoke with a deep insight on both the Eastern and Western Wisdom Traditions. The afternoon sessions were facilitated by Gavin Laurie and Diana Dunningham-Chapotin, and covered various aspects of Lodge work. Around 22 members were fortunate to be able to attend this truly instructive event. We also sponsored an Australian member to the School.

### **Overseas Lecturers**

Nelda Samaral toured the country in November / December 2002. Nelda held three weekend workshops on Therapeutic Touch in Auckland, Palmerston North, and Dunedin and also visited many of the Lodges and Study Centres around the country. Some of our Lodges have continued to work with Therapeutic Touch as demonstrated by Nelda.

Ravi Ravindra came to New Zealand mainly for the School of Theosophy but he was also able to tour the main centres. Ravi was well received and in some cases also spoke on local radio. Diana Dunningham-Chapotin also travelled around the South Island speaking at almost all the Lodges and Study Centres in this area. Diane Kynaston on a visit from Australia spoke at several Lodges in the North Island.

### **National Lecturers**

We have been fortunate to have a larger number of our members willing to lecture at various branches and study groups around the country. This year we have been able to send a speaker to almost all branches and study centres at least once a month during 2003. This has helped to stimulate an interest in Theosophy in many areas around the country. This The Lodges and Study Centres were assisted by Headquarters in advertising these talks to the wider public and also with some of the expenses of these travellers.

Our thanks to the many speakers who gave freely of their time and skill and made this possible.

### **Speakers Training**

Over Queens Birthday weekend Bryan Pollock facilitated a weekend training session in Auckland, for speakers who were interested in learning how to use Data-Projectors and computer software in the presentation of talks. The weekend was well attended, and all those present came away with some understanding of how to use Power Point to produce visual aids for their presentations. Both

HPB Lodge and Headquarters have purchased equipment to allow speakers to use such presentations in their talks, and several of the National Lecturers have been making good use of these skills.

### **Video Library and Cassette Centre**

Bryan and Helen Pollock have taken on the production of professional videos on behalf of the Section. They have produced some very high quality videos of John Algeo and Ravi Ravindra's talks during the past year, which are available at a very reasonable cost.

Charles Sitwell has, over the last year, been transferring some of the audio cassettes to digital format so that we are better able to preserve them and eventually make them available on CD-ROM. So far he has been working mainly on the G. Hodson tapes, his talking books, but also the Yoga of Light and other titles.

### **Springbrook Sponsorship**

The Australian section once more offered to sponsor an NZ student to attend their School during April of this year. Helen Pollock went on our behalf with some further assistance from the New Zealand section for travel.

### **Overseas Scholarships**

The New Zealand Section agreed this year to sponsor several students to attend Theosophical Schools overseas. Erika Bianca and Anne Boston received sponsorship for travel to School of Theosophy in Krotona, California; Krotona agreed to provide them with some sponsorship for tuition and accommodation while they stayed at the Centre. Virginia Innes-Jones received some sponsorship to help her with travel to the European summer school.

### **Study Groups**

Headquarters are now serving seven study groups:- Gore, Takaka, Dannevirke, Gisborne, Christchurch, Wanaka and Invercargill. Wanaka and Invercargill are new centres both coming into existence this year. It is encouraging to see the growth of centres in the lower part of the South Island. These groups are making use of visiting speakers, literature, the video library, and the postal library. They provide a valuable link to the Society for people living in outlying areas.

### **Theosophical Digest**

The Theosophical Digest is published by The Theosophical Publishing House in The Philippines. It is a most remarkable magazine, in "Readers Digest" format, with condensed articles from many Theosophical publications. A good magazine to leave around for friends, or perhaps to distribute to local waiting rooms, to give people an inkling of what the Theosophical Society is about. Maureen Paterson has kindly agreed to take over its distribution in New Zealand and to see that it is spread as widely as possible.

### **The Theosophist**

This is the magazine of the International President, which is distributed monthly. Lois and Fred Pollock have for many years organized subscriptions to this most valuable Magazine throughout NZ, but have decided to retire from this, passing on the work to Headquarters where it is now handled by the Treasurer. Many thanks for their tireless effort over the years.

### **Donations to Libraries**

This year, rather than send books out to branches and study centres we have sent them all some of the well presented Study Courses on various aspects of Theosophy. It is encouraging to see many groups using these materials.

### **Headquarters Library**

Headquarters members, and members in general, continue to make good use of our local library facilities. We lent out 305 books during the year.

### **Archives and Reference Library**

We have a very enthusiastic working group who have put a great deal of effort into our archives over the last year. Much of this has been in finding out information and putting processes into place, but finally we are starting to see some progress in this area. Dorothy Sewell has also put a great deal of effort into sorting out old Magazines that have been piling up in our Section Headquarters over the years. Still a long way to go but great progress has been made.

### **Property at Orewa**

The property at Orewa continues to be watched over and maintained. JoyeMichelle Mitchell as the

Tenancy Overseer is ensuring that any tenancy issues are dealt with promptly and Stuart Brydon continues as Maintenance Overseer.

### **Constitution Review**

The new Constitution, which has been under due process now for almost two years, has finally, in September 2003, come into force after some final requests for alterations by Adyar. This mainly involved the way that the National Section is administered with changes to the way staff and officers are appointed as well as ensuring there are open and transparent processes in place at all levels and plenty of opportunity for input before any major decisions can be made. This also heralds in a new position of Education Co-Coordinator, a position which will largely be involved in the organizational aspects of extended workshops, lecture tours, training sessions and study programmes around the country on behalf of the New Zealand section.

### **Membership Details**

Total Number of new membership:	155
Total Number of outgoing members	96

An increase of 59 members giving us a total of 1092 members.

### **Died**

Morrison Burgess	Vladimir Loncar
Willem Baalbergen	Dorothy Morris
Nancy Turvey	Nancy Bright
Stanley Abbott	Joy McHugh
Anne Ras Van Urk	Leslie Bloomfield
Erna Moss	Nola Drinnan

### **Acknowledgments**

In the work for the Theosophical Society in New Zealand there are countless people who have worked in various way to promote and make the work of theosophy possible. To thank them all individually would be a difficult job, especially as I am sure to miss someone out. However the work that is done is recognized on many levels and it is with a heart full of gratitude that I thank all those that have worked for the Society and for the benefit of humanity over the last year.

I do wish to express my special appreciation for the help given by our National Vice President, Charles Sitwell, who has put so much effort and time this year into too many activities to name but including digitising audiotapes, proof-reading, database design and build, Constitution wording etc.

Our Treasurer Graham Eden, who comes into the office for at least two days a week to see to the Society's finances, for his valuable help and advice in the maintenance of the Society's assets and investments.

Also special thanks to Marilyn Hannah who is ever in the office dealing with the day to day issues that arise and for making sure that everything happens so smoothly. Marilyn's effort is always appreciated and without her very capable skills the office would not operate as well as it does.

I would also like to give special thanks to Robert Jones. Robert does not have an official position, but he is the one who makes sure that everything at our Headquarters is in order and has been of invaluable assistance with all the major renovations and work we have been doing in Auckland this year. His untiring help will always be appreciated.

John Vorstermans  
**National President**