

Annual Report of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand Incorporated.

From 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004

The end of the previous year saw the New Zealand Section adopt a new Constitution and rules. This has brought about some change in the way we, as a National Section operate and this year has been one of settling into these new processes of working.

The Section Officers and Staff along with a new Management Team help oversee the day-to-day administration work of the Section. The creation of the position of Education Coordinator, as part of the administration team, has enabled more focus on the promotion of theosophy in branches and study groups.

To look at the Section's direction, policy and to deal with member representation we have a National Council which met three times in the last year, in November 2003, April 2004 and September 2004. The council is made up of the branch Presidents, to ensure each branch has representation, and the Officers of the Society, the National President, National Vice-President and Treasurer. The National President is responsible for reporting the activities of the Management Team to this meeting.

The last year has also seen the introduction of postal voting by the membership for the offices of National President and Vice-President.

The highlights of the year have been the Orewa Convention in January 2004 with guest speakers Linda and Pedro Oliveira, The School of Theosophy in May 2004, with guest Richard Brooks, and a lecture tour by Diana Dunningham-Chapotan.

National Council

The main areas that the National Council have been focused on this year are:

The reference library and archives cataloging. This has included the installation of a new database, protecting important archival material. This is on-going work led by Valarie White and Dorothy Sewell and a group of helpers.

An Education and Outreach workshop led by Vivien Berry to look at how we as an organization are presenting ourselves and the types of skills necessary to ensure we are being heard by different groups of people in today's world. Allan Philpot and Murray Stentiford also presented a workshop looking at what we can do as an organization in this area. This will be further progressed next year.

National Speakers – we looked at what were the expectations of National Speakers and if they were meeting the needs of the branches. It was made clear that some considerable work is required in this area to ensure we are presenting theosophy in a language and style that people

today can hear and put into practice. The Education Coordinator, and her working group have been putting a lot of effort into coming up with various models to look at for next year which will consist of a mixture of National Speakers, Branch training weekends, and regional retreats.

Orewa Property. Some members who were present at the Orewa Convention have formed a working group and are looking at the possibility of doing something with the land at Orewa to further the objects of the Society. So far there have been ideas presented to build a small retreat center where members can come together to study theosophy, and another to build a conference centre on the property. No solid proposals have been made by the group at this stage.

Publicity. Eileen Styra, one of the members of the Public Relations working group presented a paper to the council on publicity and areas we can look at. Some good ideas have come out of this to help us create a better profile for ourselves in the future. Much of it is bringing our written material, language, and presentations up-to-date and looking at other modern alternatives for presenting theosophy.

Officers.

The National Vice-President Charles Sitewell was elected by postal ballot in October 2003 for a 3 year term from January 2004 to the close of 2006. This position will be up for nomination again in 2006.

The National President, John Vorstermans was re-elected for a further three year term by a postal ballot in August 2004. John's second term in office will begin in January 2005. This position will be up for nomination again in 2007.

Graham Eden was appointed as Treasurer for a 3 year term beginning at January 2004.

Sandy Ravelli was appointed as the Education Coordinator for a 3 year term.

Hugh Dixon was appointed as editor of Theosophy in N.Z. for a 3 year term beginning at January 2004.

Sharn Laurie was appointed as the Section Librarian for a 3 year term beginning at January 2004.

Management Team.

Management Team consists of the National President, the National Vice-President, the Treasurer and two further members of the Society in Good standing. The two extra members appointed to this position were Allan Morse and Sandy Ravelli.

Minutes from all meetings are sent to branch presidents.

This team meets mostly on a monthly basis and has proven a valuable and vital component in the administration. The intent is to bring the extra people onto the team to compliment the skills of the group, to ensure that they are both varied and practical. It is good to work with such a team of experienced people.

Education Coordinator.

This is a new office position established by the new constitution and rules. Sandy Ravelli has agreed to accept this position and take up the challenge of establishing the role and working with the Education Working Group and National Council to put into place an education profile that will meet the requirements of the Section today. Sandy has, over the last 12 months, taken up this job with enthusiasm and vigour, which is already making an impact on branches and their work. She has put together a Branch Handbook to help presidents and committees, as well as doing some further valuable work in putting together study material that can be used in branches and study groups.

Sandy and the working group have also put together some valuable thoughts on National Speakers and the Educational Programme of the Section, presented this to the National Council, the fruition of which will begin to appear in the 2004/2005 year.

I would like to express my thanks to Sandy for taking on this role and for the commitment she has shown the Society over the last 12 months.

Audio CDROM

Our National Vice-President, Charles Sitwell has this year produced two CDROMs from the original tapes by Geoffrey Hodson. "A Yoga of Light" and "Reincarnation Fact or Fallacy"

National Speakers Programme.

This year the following subjects were covered in the National Speakers Programme.

Energy Within and Around Us	Co-operation with the Divas
Death and the Afterlife	Comparative Religion Overview
The Real and the Unreal (alias WISIWIG)	Secrete Doctrine: Cosmogogenesis
Hindu Philosophy	Revelations of Zoroastrianism
Symbolic Language: communication from the higher to the lower	The Disciplines of Chi Kung: Mind, Breath and Body
Diet in Religion	Man Know Thyself
The Gita Wisdom	Birth, Death and Bardo
Graphology – Window into the Soul	Music As Meditation
Affinity and Relationships Govern Our Lives	What did We Do In Our Previous Lives?
Hidden Powers of the Mind	What Are Our True Psychic Faculties?
Wisdom Teaching Found in the Pyramids and Temples of Egypt	Universal Consciousness: an exploration of consciousness
What Makes The World Go Round?	Understanding Relationships In Our Lives
Symbolic Meaning in the TS Emblem	The Way Of Knowledge – Jnana Yoga
Living Power of the Aborigine Wisdom Tradition	The Veil of Isis
Sufism: Islamic Mysticism	The Wheel of Rebirth
Dharma: the basis of human morals and ethics	Illusion – Known In The East As Maya
The Return of the King	Karma in Families
The Essential Unity Of All Religions	Theosophy and Paranormal Communication
Things That Go Bump In The Night	The Ethics of Occultism
Occult Ecology	Esoteric Christianity

The Psychic Dimensions of Religion
 What Is Karma Anyway
 Basic Principles of Occultism
 Life Between Life
 Chakras and the Subtle Bodies
 Pure Energy Healing

The Two Hands Of God: The Problem Of Evil
 I'm Dead. What Now?
 Psychic Archaeological Research
 Angels: Messengers of God
 Formative Forces in Plant Growth

Convention

The convention was this year held in Orewa with Guest Speakers Linda and Pedro Oliveira who each gave a public lecture and presented a well received workshop on HP Blavatsky's Golden Stairs. Much thanks goes out to the speakers at the convention and especially to our hosts JoyeMichelle Mitchell and the members of Orewa Lodge who helped to make this such a spectacular convention.

School of Theosophy

This year's school was another dynamic event with our guest Richard Brocks exploring the common threads running through some of the many world religions. We were lucky to have with us also Helen Blake from Australia whom the NZ Section sponsored. Thanks go out to Sandy Ravelli for organizing the afternoon workshops for this school and to the workshop facilitators Gavin Laurie, Hazel Menehira, Murray Stentiford and John Vorstermans.

Springbrook Sponsorship.

The Australian section once again offered to sponsor a student in New Zealand to attend their annual School. Lenette Burgin from Oamaru Lodge accepted the invitation to attend and found the program most stimulating.

Branches.

The Christchurch Branch of the Theosophical Society Incorporated (also a registered charitable trust) went through the final stages of liquidation in January 2004. This process was started in 1999 at the branch AGM and ratified at a further meeting a month later. It is always a loss to see a branch close down. There are still some headquarters members in Christchurch who are meeting casually as a study group to keep the flame alive in the area.

The Hastings Branch also closed down during the last year. The branch has been struggling for the last few years and this year was not able to get a quorum of members together for an AGM so have decided to close. The remaining members are now meeting at the Napier branch.

Membership Details.

Total Number of new members:	126
Total number of outgoing members:	174

A decrease of 48 members this year giving us a total of 1045 members.

Died.

Carson, Mrs C.E.	Herring, Mr A.R.
Wynn, Mrs E.M.	Ashforth, Mrs B.M.
Cosham, Mr S.E.	Eynon, Mrs E.A.
Mackenzie, Mr D.S.	Alexander, Mr C.W.H.
Smith, Mrs Y.	Burrell, Mrs G.M.
Urbahn, Mrs G.R.	Burn, Mrs J.E
Patterson, Mrs J.V.	Leen, Mrs E.M.
Ashforth, Miss E.I.	Langford, Mrs A.P.
Morel, Ms R.	Kuring, Mr T.G.
McIntosh, Mr N.S.	

Thanks

My special thanks to Marilyn Hannah, the person who is often the first contact for people contacting the Section Office. Marilyn is a vital component of the smooth running of our Section and to her I give my special thanks.

Of course there are many other people who have helped to make the work easier this year like Dorothy Sewell, Robert Jones and Valerie White who all live in Vasana House in Auckland. There are just too many to mention in this report. I thank you all for working to help the objects of our Society and to keep the place on its feet. Without these people we would not be here today.

John Vorstermans
National President