

**THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - OREWA LODGE  
ANNUAL REPORT - YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30TH 2007.**

It is with pleasure that I present to our members a report on the activities of our Lodge over the year from October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006 to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

**LODGE MEETINGS / BRANCH PROGRAM** - Our very grateful thanks go to all the people who have informed, motivated and inspired us with their presentations on a wide range of interesting topics:-

- \*Mareva Barrie - 'Mother Gaia, the Devic Realms, and the Elemental Kingdoms'  
& 'Mandalas as a Healing Modality'
- Diane & John Winder - 'Wisdom from the Ancients - the Essenes'
- \*Hazel Menehira - 'Navigating the Spiritual Supermart'
- Jamila Cranston-Buckley - 'Sufism and Universal Worship'
- \*Prof. Ravi Ravindra from Canada - 'Have you a Pilgrim Soul'
- Monique Murphy - 'Health: Physical and Spiritual'
- \*Murray Stentiford - 'The Reality of Angels'
- Ray Neilsen - 'The Aetherius Society'
- \*Pamela Zane & Warwick Keys from Wanganui - 'Worry and the Law of Attraction'
- Dr Robin Kelly - 'Opening to the Infinite: New Trends in Healing'
- Vincent Maire - 'Journey to Remember'
- David England - 'In Tune with the Infinite'
- Elisabeth Von Madarasz - 'Living in Your Human Divinity'
- Murray Stentiford - 'Celestial Sounds in Stone'
- Tessa Williamson - 'Some New/Old Ways of Healing'

Attendance at these sessions has ranged from 8 to 33. They have all been open to the public. We are extremely fortunate that people of such calibre have been willing to share their time, energy, knowledge, wisdom, understanding and expertise with us.

For the past couple of years Branches have been required to be more self-sufficient in creating their programs with fewer speakers/presenters being provided by TS NZ and we are very fortunate that we have been able to gain the services of such wonderful people.

We have tried some new things this year:-

- Mareva Barrie's sessions were held on the same Sunday, morning and afternoon and people could attend one or both with shared lunch between. This worked well as the afternoon session was very practical. Both sessions were very well received.
- A weekend workshop 'Growing into awareness' was conducted by Sandy Ravelli. Only 4 people attended but it was a very worthwhile experience for them all.
- We introduced a new weekday discussion group called Wednesday Wonders. This started as a monthly event, then as those attending wanted it more often it changed to fortnightly and currently it is 3-weekly. This provides an informal opportunity for members to discuss things they wonder about or find wonder-full.

We have continued to have a shared lunch before most of our Sunday afternoon meetings. For the few who attend it is a pleasant time of fellowship with other members and with the visiting speaker.

Our grateful thanks to NZ Headquarters, and the Education Co-Ordinator (until January Sandy Ravelli and since then Melanie Closs) who organized the itineraries and arrangements for those traveling speakers who were sponsored by the NZ TS (starred in the list above), provided beautiful full-colour flyers and paid for the newspaper advertisements for those sessions.

Your committee already has ideas for the program for next year and are always looking for suitable people to give presentations compatible with the Theosophical Objects and Ideals. If you know of anyone please let us know.

**EXTRAMURAL OPPORTUNITIES** - Ravi Ravindra led a weekend in Auckland and a 9-day School of Theosophy at Taupo which were open to all our members. Unfortunately few were able to attend.

**MEMBERSHIP** - At the beginning of the year we had 74 members. Since then we have been very pleased to welcome as new members Monique Murphy, Robyn Cater, Maree Pool, Susan Roberts, Anne Rogerson, Freda Snelgrove and Nel Van Amsterdam. I have introduced a little 'ceremony' (for want of a better word) to welcome new members at our first meeting after their joining. Lyn O'Brien has not yet transferred out. Judy Hampson, Ken McDonough, and Gordon Shepherd have passed on; we wished them well on their transition and extended condolences to those they left behind. Three members have resigned. With 8 members gained and 6 lost our membership at September 30th, 2007 was 76.

**COMMITTEE** - Your committee elected at the 2006 A.G.M. was:- President JoyeMichelle Mitchell, Vice-President Heather Bell, Secretary Kareena Casselton, Treasurer Rosemary Grant, Librarian Maureen Mobbs, and committee members Jean Grace, John Mobbs, and Bob Urban. Monique Murphy, Sue Roberts and Tom Sinclair were co-opted during the year as additional committee members. Bob Urban has found it too difficult to continue on the committee and Monique Murphy has taken on the publicity role which Bob had been doing. The committee met 8 times during the year and spent many hours planning and facilitating all the activities of the branch here, considering and carrying through all the legalities and practicalities of keeping the branch running well. Considerable time has also been spent deliberating on matters pertaining to the Theosophical Society in NZ and preparing responses to requests or reports from a national level.

**NEWSLETTERS** - Eight Orewa Branch Newsletters have been produced and distributed during this year. Wherever possible I email our Newsletters. This reduces the cost, and it also makes it possible to quickly send out additional interesting information as it becomes available. The emailed Newsletters also go to many non-members who have asked to receive them. Please if you are not currently on the email list and go on to email do let me have your address.

**PUBLICITY/MEDIA** - Monique Murphy has taken over this 'portfolio' from Bob Urban and has written and submitted news items on upcoming presentations to the Rodney Times. Sometimes they

get published and sometimes they don't. The news items sometimes attract more people than the paid advertisements which I submit for every meeting.

**HALL** -The donations we receive from people using the hall for their own functions are welcome. Please let your friends and acquaintances know that it is available, when not needed by the Lodge, for compatible activities. Contact me for bookings.

**LIBRARY** - The amount of use made of the Library is disappointing. Many new books have been added and we are very grateful to those who have donated books. Do make time to peruse the great wealth of material available in our Library.

**NEIGHBORS** - Although the Orewa Lodge is quite separate from and has no jurisdiction over the residences surrounding the hall which belong to TS NZ the presence of these neighbors adds to the Lodge. The life of the Lodge and the lives of the tenants are very connected with many of the tenants being the life-blood of the Lodge. The hall is always under supervision and benefits from the feeling of being surrounded by a Theosophical community.

**CHAPEL** - The little church building on the TS land near the Forest Glen driveway was built by the Liberal Catholic Church in 1962 and they held regular then spasmodic services there until about a year ago. They no longer wish to use the building and have given it to the TS and we are able to use it. Monique Murphy and I have, with welcome help from several people, cleaned and redecorated the inside of it and waterblasted, scraped and painted the outside. It is now called Arohanui AllFaith Chapel. Monique and I are leading a service of Universal Worship, including all faiths, there on the second Sunday of each month. The chapel is open each day for people to meditate etc and also available for sacred ceremonies such as namings, blessings, renewal of vows, funerals and other celebrations of life. It was formerly named the 'Church of St Michael and the Angels' and like many St Michael churches particularly in Europe it sits on an energy line. In our case this is connected to an energy vortex (one of the earth's vital energy points) near the centre of the vacant land beyond. Spiritual teachers are now saying that we urgently need to work with those energy centres to restore the soul of the earth.

**TS NEW ZEALAND** - A major part of my role has been representing Orewa members on the National Council and the Properties Trust Board. Relevant matters have been reported back to your committee and where necessary discussed and views fed back to the NZ body. Although there have only been 4 meetings of both these groups in the year there are many email discussions between meetings, many of which require deliberation with our committee. Many of the decisions of the National Council impact on our Branch here at Orewa. Particularly this year the 5-Year Plan and the Strategic Financial Planning.

In addition I am Tenancy Overseer for the TS residences here and responsible for the letting of the units and garages and for any required upgrading of them between tenants. Stuart Brydon is the maintenance overseer and arranges for any repairs needed during tenancies. Stuart also does the major mowing of the large areas of the land with John Mobbs mowing the smaller areas. John also keeps the communal gardens looking beautiful. Also this year I have been a member of the Properties Trust Board Executive which meets monthly and is responsible for the day-to-day management and necessary work on all the TS properties. All these positions / roles / jobs are

voluntary with Stuart, John and I receiving a very small rent concession in recognition of the many hours spent in service on the TS properties.

John Vorstermans has completed his term as NZ President and we offer our grateful thanks to him for his dedicated work. Warwick Keys will take over that role at Convention in January 2008.

**CONVENTION** - Heather Bell and myself were your delegates at the 2007 Convention at New Plymouth in January, and several members also attended. Convention 2008 is to be held in Auckland so it is hoped that many of our members will be able to attend. It is always very interesting and a great experience to be with members from all over New Zealand sharing in sessions with a variety of quality presenters.

**THEOSOPHIA** - The new-look NZ TS magazine has been warmly received with many appreciative comments being made about the new format and content.

**DONATIONS** - As a small service to humanity we send used stamps to Oxfam which they sell to support their work and they have expressed their appreciation for this. Please continue to bring as many used stamps as you can to the hall.

Members also have the opportunity to support the Bon Tibetan children's orphanage through the donation box in the hall.

**THANKS** - Many thanks to all committee members for your commitment and focus in all the decision-making, planning and work of running this branch. Your wisdom, knowledge, care and support have been very much appreciated.

Very special thanks to the following:-

- Heather Bell for her support as VicePresident and for stepping in to the up-front role when I was unable to be present.
- Kareena Casselton for being our Secretary and recording our committee minutes so faithfully.
- Rosemary Grant for the very efficient and clear handling of our finances.
- Maureen Mobbs who, as well as being Librarian, has ensured that the hall is clean and ready for our meetings.
- Bob Urban and Monique Murphy for seeing to news articles for the local papers.
- John Mobbs for continuing to keep the lawns and gardens around the hall looking beautiful.
- Jim and Rosemary Grant for their help with the lunches and their willing assistance with many tasks.

Thank you so much all of you.

It has been a very full year. Much has been accomplished and very much more yet to be done.

During my time as President I have endeavoured to make our Lodge a heart-centred place and to greet each person coming into it as a friend. I hope you find it to be a place of love.

May the Orewa Branch of the Theosophical Society continue to work for the Highest Good for many years to come, with all its members ever striving with heart and soul to fulfill the words from a pamphlet recently produced by TS NZ - "A way of life is implicit in Theosophy, in which we act

from a realisation of our oneness with all life and strive to awaken our higher potential for intuition, understanding, insight, love, compassion and creativity."

May you all be blessed.

*JoyeMichelle Mitchell*, PRESIDENT.