

### *From the Chairman*

I had the privilege recently of addressing the housekeepers and deputies from almost all of our Abbeyfield Houses from around the country. In fact I think there was only one house not represented. We are so lucky to have these people in our organisation to provide meals and carry out general house duties. This is a really special role and it takes really special people as they are often the first person that residents talk to when they have a problem or want to know something and even if they don't know the answer they usually have resources to get the answers from. I mentioned that we have to face change, for although we feel comfortable where we are, it is easy to become complacent, and change keeps us on our toes and keeps our brains alert. I can see that over the next few years our organization is going to face numerous changes and challenges. One of the housekeepers said to me that "a challenge is an opportunity in disguise". With that attitude in our minds I believe we can overcome most of the challenges that will be thrown at us.

Just how do I see Abbeyfield changing in the future? I hope that there are some things we can resist, like becoming nursing homes, and that we can cope with the pressures that the large residential villages are facing. We do need to consider the size of our houses, and the implications of the sleepover rulings from the Courts. If for no other than economic reasons, we do need to look at providing suites suited to couples who may both benefit from an Abbeyfield lifestyle. We have a proven model but only a few houses have had couples as residents, whereas in future this may grow, and we need to see this as an opportunity. On 30 March we just became part of a merged Abbeyfield International and the Abbeyfield Society. This change hopefully will see us less isolated at the bottom of the world and with the appointment of an International Director become more a part of the worldwide organization rather than by name alone. The nuts and bolts of this merger will be discussed at the Milan International Conference in May, and I hope that in the next newsletter I can report on some very favourable developments.

As I write this, our General Secretary Chris is in Whangarei preparing for the re-opening of that house as a fully rental home rather than falling under the Retirement Villages legislation as a license to occupy model. Already we have the bones of a new Society to run the house, one definite resident and several others very interested. Chris will be advertising for housekeepers, society committee members and residents while in the North and we hope that it will only be a matter of time before we will have another full and happy house. If you know of people likely to be interested in a suite in that area, then please let the national office know.

Until after the Milan Conference, best wishes to all involved in Abbeyfield.

*Peter Smale*  
Chairman

#### **Thoughts to Ponder ...**

- Clouds fly lower during the night than during the day.
- In ancient times, vinegar was the strongest acid known.
- Figs have the highest dietary fibre content of any common fruit, nut or vegetable.
- Perspiration is odourless. Bacteria on the skin creates the odour.

#### **In This Issue ...**

- From the Chairman
- Thoughts to Ponder
- Annual Subscription Reminder
- New Publication to Note and Share
- Change of AGM Date and Venue
- Editorial from Christchurch

The Abbeyfield Board aims to reproduce this smaller style of newsletter more regularly for largely "in house" distribution to members and residents and by email. Look for the next issue in about 6-8 weeks. Future issues will have photos, the results of the Abbeyfield week competitions and your stories.

**Reminder ...**

- Annual subscriptions are due – these must be paid to be eligible to represent your Society and vote at the AGM.

Community Housing Aotearoa launched a new publication at their recent conference - “Doorways” and Abbeyfield is featured on the back page. The link is [http://communityhousing.org.nz/?page\\_id=2184](http://communityhousing.org.nz/?page_id=2184)

Please share this link with your Abbeyfield networks.

**! NOTE ! ! NOTE ! ! NOTE !**

**Change of Date and Venue for July 2011 AGM**

**Due to the seismic activity in Canterbury,**  
the Annual General Meeting of Abbeyfield New Zealand Inc  
will be held on Saturday 30 July and Sunday 31 July 2011  
in Nick Smith’s Electorate Office, Waimea Road, Nelson

***From Your Christchurch Editor .....***

There have been so many superlatives, and plain ordinary words, used to describe the three earthquakes of 4 September, 26 December and the shattering one of 22 February.

In some ways it can feel quite surreal – our family was fortunate to not be affected by the first two quakes, but our house has taken a beating in the third one. We count ourselves fortunate to still be able to live in it for now, and that our family is all safe and reasonably sound. The “surreal” aspect – driving home on 22 February at less-than-a-snail’s-pace and seeing people walking towards their homes who looked as though it had been just another day; abandoning the car and walking to our home (9km although it seemed like so much more!) and meeting people also going our way, listening to their stories of where they were, seeing some damage to houses and a lot to the roads, hearing the continual sirens and smelling acrid smoke (not knowing why); and that life is still moving on. The lucky of us still have jobs, our children find it “like camping” with going to bed by torchlight, not having power or water or tv (yay!) for several weeks, endless nights of BBQ’d food which required some creativity for variation, and wearing the same clothes for a more than one day. Adults can get used to going down the road to a public shower and laundry facilities ... there is even a resignation to using portaloos and chemical toilets! There have been times when it feels like we are living through a movie.

Sadly, this movie is too real. But there are increasing bright bits – every time something good or great happens (like a day with no shaking!) is a day on the road to recovery. To make the sadness of what has happened have a purpose, we need to see a future of positives. The people who have reached out to us have given so much love, Abbeyfield-ers offered accommodation, the generosity of not only New Zealanders but those from the rest of the world who have sent us prayers, goods, financial assistance, their loved ones to help us through those first few awful weeks ... it has been quite inspiring and overwhelming in some ways - in a good way.

Yes we are still grieving; yes we are still talking about what and where and how and when and why; yes Christchurch is still open for business!!! **Thank you** for all your support and love and thoughts – and see you next year for the Annual General Meeting in our new city!!!!

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