

Grey Power

Whakatane District

Part of Your Future

June 2017, Newsletter

Mailing Address:

PO Box 830, Whakatane, 3158

Email Address:

whakatanegreypower@gmail.co

Website:

<http://greypowerwhakatane.org.nz>

June 8, General Meeting

Our next General Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 8 at 1.30 pm, the venue will be the Liberty Centre auditorium, 65 Wairaka Road, Whakatane, 3120.

We are extremely pleased to advise that we have secured Winston Peters, Member for Northland and Leader of New Zealand First Party, as our guest speaker for this meeting. We have been advised that his presentation will be nominally thirty minutes, followed by an opportunity for questions.

Membership Renewals

A reminder that membership renewals are now overdue, we would advise members who have not renewed their membership by June 30, that their details will be deleted from the Grey Power Federation database, if your power is being provided by Grey Power Energy, you will no longer be eligible for the discounted rates.

*When I was a kid I thought "Nap Time" was a punishment.
Now, it feels like a small vacation.*

AGM – May 19 – Knox Hall

Thank you to the members that attended our AGM on May 19, our guest speaker was Gareth Hughes, list MP for the Green Party, and whilst we appreciate his politics may not be yours, I do believe we can all agree, he delivered an excellent presentation and gave very clear and concise answers to the questions raised,

We have written to Gareth thanking him for attending our meeting and for delivering such an excellent presentation, together with taking time to fully answer all questions raised.

The "Shifty" Thief

An internal auditor for a manufacturing group was concerned about anomalies in stock levels. He thought someone might be pinching stock but he couldn't prove it. He had his eye on one shifty-looking individual who every day drove his old truck out of the factory with the load covered by a tarpaulin.

Time after time the auditor stopped the bloke, made him remove the tarpaulin and then inspected the load. On every occasion, there was only scrap metal in the truck which the driver said he was taking to the tip. On three occasions the auditor made the bloke remove the tarpaulin and then unload the scrap in front of him, suspecting that there might be stolen stock hidden underneath. Nothing. He could never find anything amiss.

After a few months of this, the auditor was offered a better job elsewhere and resigned. A few weeks later he was drinking in a pub when the shifty character walked in. On an impulse, the auditor went up to him and said, "Look, I've left the company, I'm not interested in taking it any further and I won't stop you, but I just have to know. What were you taking?"

The bloke looked at him and said

"Tarpaulins."

Grey Power Federation AGM

Brian Newton and myself attended the Grey Power Federation AGM, which this year was held in Palmerston North.

The remits, by and large, were unmemorable; if you wish to see them, we were advised they would be on the Grey Power website, albeit we have yet to find them! five or six of the twenty- seven remits were of interest, but as is inevitable at some AGM's, most of the ones of minor interest, dare I say trivial, were discussed at interminable length, usually by the same few people.

Mac Welsh, who has been instrumental in gaining Grey Power members the cheaper power deal from Pulse Energy, (which contributes nominally 23% to the Federations income,) and more recently the more affordable health insurance, was voted out as Vice President and replaced by Peter Matcham from Wellington, who has sat on numerous committees, but would seem to have achieved very little. Understandably, Mac was extremely upset by this, and may well decide to walk away from Grey Power, with which he has been involved for ten years, which would leave a huge void, as there does not appear to be anyone with his negotiating skills, business contacts and industry networks.

The minister for Seniors (Maggie Barry), was one of the speakers. Maggie pointed out that seniors have economic clout and that this would increase as the number of seniors increased. It appears that the Gold Card will be able to be used as official I.D. when a photograph is added and that this can be done through the AA for free. National would also like to put a chip into the cards so that they could be used for everything from transport to banking.

As we are leading healthier lives and therefore will live longer, we need to plan for retirement. Maggie stated that keeping seniors in their own homes and communities for as long as possible was a priority.

There were 2000 reported cases of elder abuse last year, but up 10,000 go unreported; three quarters of elder abuse comes from the family. From July, there will be a toll-free number to call for immediate advice or to report elder abuse.

Another speaker was Diane Maxwell, the Retirement Commissioner; we were advised that the Retirement Commission is an autonomous crown entity; it is government funded, but independent and can disagree with the government.

Amongst other things, Diane said that the critical period for planning for retirement, and actually doing something about it, was from age 30 to 50. Of those who are 50+, women are generally worse off than men.

The Retirement Commissioner's recommendations to Government are:

- Need to keep Superannuation pegged to wages.
- Recommend residence of twenty- five years before being eligible for Super, the Government has reduced that to twenty years.
- Invest in the 50's age group to keep them working to a later age as we will probably live to 100 before too long. This needs retraining together with investment in health and housing.
- Decouple Kiwi Saver and Super so that Kiwi Saver can be accessed at different ages.

Diane said that there are lots of ways in which businesses will need to change to cater for older New Zealanders; the print on menus needs to be larger; the time allowed for road crossings by the little green man need to be longer; web sites need to allow the size of the fonts to be size adjustable.

We were informed that Super costs \$13 million a year, (nominally 4% of GDP and around half of that allocated by other OECD countries) and that we need to resume contributions into the Cullen Fund.

The health budget was increased by \$700,000,000.00 last year, I assume that was across all age groups of which Superannuitants are only a small part.

We also had an extremely informative and interesting presentation from Gary Holden, CEO of Pulse Energy, explaining power costs over the past 100 years together detailing how Solar Energy is becoming more main stream, and will play a major role in the not too distant future.

Other speakers were Winston Peters from New Zealand First and the Labour spokesman for housing, Phil Twyford.

Susan Anderson - Secretary

Internet Security

We received the following email from our Federation Office:

"We have had a phone call from one of your member's daughters, who advised that her mum had received from you the forwarded email (originally from our office) about the Spark Scam that is currently doing the rounds. Her mother missed the line that said that it was URGENT: SCAM but instead read the scam email below that and then rang her daughter telling her that she needed to send her Bank Account passwords etc. Her daughter has spoken to her mother advising her that it is a scam but she thought that you should know that this issue has occurred as she is concerned that other elderly members may do the same thing and she suggested that you send another email clearly stating that under no circumstances should you give out your password to another person."

We have repeatedly advocated in our newsletters concerning the importance of being IT aware, or computer savvy. It is becoming increasingly essential to be fully aware of internet protocols around service providers and/or banks. We would stress to all members that no legitimate providers will **EVER** ask you for your passwords and/or personal banking security details; if anyone receives any emails and/or calls requesting this information to be given, it is a scam and as such should be ignored and/or reported.

Having said this, it is extremely important that you should only ever use your own devices, and in a secure internet environment, never ever access any of your personal security details in a public area, such as an internet café, free wi-fi area, library or any other similar establishment, and always, always log out of your bank when your transactions are completed.

I am sure most, if not all, of you are aware that internet banking is extremely secure, be it via your computer, laptop or hand held devices, you simply need to follow the protocols to ensure that security. Again, as advised in previous newsletters, many providers are not simply encouraging payment via Internet Banking, but in many instances adding additional fees for payments made via other methods; part of the rationale behind this is to cover the costs incurred in processing payments made via cheques, which we ourselves will soon be incurring, as explained on the following page.

Brian Newton - Treasurer

Charges for Clearing Cheques

As stated at our AGM on May 19 this year, we advise all members who choose to pay their memberships by cheque, that as from July 1, 2017, Kiwi Bank will be charging a \$1.00 clearing fee on all payments via cheque. As there are a substantial number of members who still choose to use this method of payment, we will need to increase the cost of memberships for all members who wish to continue to pay via a cheque as follows:

Single Person Membership: \$16.00

Couple Membership: \$26.00

Membership payments made using Internet Banking or cash over the counter at a bank will not be subject to this increase.

The Jaguar Mechanic.....

A Jaguar mechanic was removing the cylinder head from the engine of an E-type when he spotted a well-known cardiac surgeon in the garage.

The surgeon was waiting for the service manager to come and take a look at his car when the mechanic shouted out across the garage "Hey Doc.... want to take a look at this?"

The surgeon, a bit surprised, walked over to where the mechanic was working.

The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and said -
" So Doc, look at this engine. I opened its heart, took the valves out, repaired or replaced anything damaged and then put everything back in. When I finished it worked just like new."

"How is it , then, that I make \$60,000 a year - while you make \$1.5 million when you and I are doing basically the same work? "

The cardiac surgeon paused, leaned over and whispered to the mechanic...

"Try doing it with the engine running !! "

Staying Sharp

Successful Aging for Your Brain

Getting to know your brain

Every aspect of brain function is represented in the brain as patterns of electrical and chemical signals travelling between nerve cells.

Nerve cells are called neurons. Their fibres, called axons, form connections, called synapses with other neurons. When activated by a thought etc, a neuron sends a tiny electrical current down it's axon, releasing biochemicals, called neurotransmitters that cross the gap where one neuron meets another (the synaptic gap) and latch on to receptors on the receiving neuron.

Neurons communicate via synapses with other cells, creating a dense network of pathways and circuits, that criss-cross the brain and underlie every aspect of human thought and behaviour.

When we experience something repeatedly, we are re-activating the same circuit of synapses over and over again resulting in stronger synapses that transmit nerve signals more robustly. If a particular synapse is not regularly activated, it weakens and ultimately disappears: the old adage "Use it or Lose it" is true.

As we age, our brains lose neurons: **FALSE!**

Modern neuroscience research has shown that neurogenesis, the birth and development of new neurons, continues throughout life. Synaptic plasticity is the ability of synapses to adapt and rewire in response to learning. This decreases with brain aging so it may take a bit longer for older people to really learn new information.

Successful Aging

The overall message of successful aging is to stay active, mentally, physically and socially.

Increasing evidence shows that physical exercise, social interactions, mental stimulation and weight control are important to longevity.

"The key to staying mentally active is to engage the brain in novel ways; activities that stimulate and challenge us intellectually seem to be the best. The brain is a learning machine. It craves novelty and challenge. Acquiring new skills and seeking out new experiences - rather than repeating the same old routines – will help ensure the brain works better simply by accumulating more knowledge, which builds more networks of connections in the brain."

James McGaugh, PhD, University of California

Exercise promotes neurogenesis in the hippocampus, the part of the brain involved in memory formation. It also strengthens neural connections and plays a vital role in nourishing and supporting brain cells.

The brain is the most energy-hungry organ in the body. It needs lots of oxygen and glucose, which are provided by the blood circulating through the brain via arteries and capillaries. Exercise increases the density and size of brain capillaries, which in turn increases the blood flow through the entire brain.

To stay physically active, we should aim at a minimum of thirty minutes a day for most days of the week; however, you don't have to do it all at once. Walking, dancing, golf etc are all fine. Social activities such as group exercise classes may be especially beneficial because they combine social interactions with physical activity.

Maintaining social ties is another factor that has been consistently correlated with healthy brain aging.

Research (*Claudia Kawas – University of California*) shows that the more contact people have with others, the better they seem to do cognitively; conversely, social isolation tends to be associated with depression and cognitive decline.

There is now overwhelming evidence that the same lifestyle and dietary factors that contribute to heart disease also increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease and age related cognitive decline. Obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and smoking are factors that decrease blood flow through the body. Having more than one of these conditions increases one's risk for dementia, as it does for heart disease, though it is better to be slightly overweight than underweight.

A diet that is rich in fruit and vegetables is heart healthy and is also good for your brain, so ensure you eat a variety of colourful, cruciferous and leafy green vegetables.

Oxidation, which can be thought of as the biological equivalent of rusting seems to contribute to aging and cognitive decline. Therefore, we need antioxidants to reduce the oxidative damage.

Brain Blockers:

Things that interfere with learning and memory.

Stress:

'Acute' stress can improve memory because it activates a surge of powerful hormones that increase the staying power of memory. These same hormones (called glucocorticoids) can damage the brain's memory centre when they are overproduced as in 'chronic stress'.

Inadequate Sleep:

Studies show that a good night's sleep is essential for the brain to consolidate newly acquired information into long term learning.

Medications:

Many common medications can negatively impact our brains. If you notice a sudden change in mental status, talk to your doctor about it.

Alcohol & Illicit Drugs:

Whilst excessive alcohol consumption has been associated with cognitive impairment and dementia, research is not clear-cut on the brain benefits or otherwise of a glass or two of wine a day.

Underlying Health Conditions:

Neurological disease or injury, depression, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes all require medical treatment.

The above has been précised from the "Staying Sharp" publication from the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand.

Dates for Your Diaries

Thursday, June 8, 2017

General Meeting – Guest Speaker the Hon Winston Peters, MP for Northland and Leader New Zealand First Party.

Venue: Liberty Auditorium, 65 Wairaka Road, Whakatane

Friday, June 30, 2017

General Meeting – Guest Speaker the Hon Te Ururoa Flavell, MP for Waiariki and co-leader of the Maori Party.

Venue: Liberty Auditorium, 65 Wairaka Road, Whakatane

Friday, July 28, 2017

General Meeting – Guest Speaker the Hon Anne Tolley, MP for the East Coast.

Venue: Knox Hall, 83 Domain Road, Whakatane

Thursday, August 10, 2017

General Meeting – Guest Speaker, Kiri Allen, Labour candidate for East Coast

Venue: Knox Hall, 83 Domain Road, Whakatane

Please Note:

We ask for a koha of \$2.00 per person for meetings held at the Liberty Auditorium, to assist with the increased costs of hiring this venue.

This will be waived upon sight of a current Grey Power membership card, valid until March 31, 2018.

The biggest lie I tell myself is "I don't need to write that down, I'll remember it."

Proposed Changes to Landline Telephones

As some of you will be aware, Spark are planning to phase out the public switched telephone network (PSTN), this is due to this being an aging technology with decreasing availability of replacement components, and of course a shortage of suitable technicians, with, since it is old technology, none coming through.

So, what does this mean for domestic users? In essence all telecommunications companies are going down the fibre route, which is of course the latest technology. Fibre uses a technology referred to as voice over internet (VOI), which means that telephone calls are routed through the fibre and not along copper lines, as they historically have been.

One direct consequence of this is that in the event of a power outage, since the system uses VOI and as such is connected to the fibre modem, which requires power, you will not be able to use the landline telephone to make any calls. If the power outage is short lived, as most are, this is not normally an issue, the majority of us have mobile devices, be they an Iphone or Smartphone, which would normally be charged to a reasonable level; however, if the outage is sustained over a longer period, as was the case following the cyclone, then if a high number of calls are made, which is a reasonable assumption in an emergency situation, mobile device batteries will quickly drain.

This is obviously not a situation we want to find ourselves in, an emergency with no communication; so, what can be done? Fortunately, there are ways of charging hand held devices other than from the charger which plugs into the power outlet.

If you have a laptop, the majority of these incorporate a number of USB ports on them, so assuming your laptop is charged, you can plug your phone directly into a USB port, yes this will take power from your laptop battery, but it should allow you at least a couple of charges.

There a number of external battery banks available from electronics retailers, these range in price from around \$25.00 up to over \$100.00, depending the power charge they produce, we wouldn't recommend buying a smaller device, those starting around the \$40.00 would offer a reasonable period of time; examples of these devices can be seen by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.noelleeming.co.nz/shop/computers-tablets/accessories/portable-power-banks/c8001-ccomputer Accessories-cPortable Power banks-p1.html>

For those members who do not have access to the internet, call in to Noel Leeming on the Strand.

It is also important to reduce the power consumption of you cell phone, be it an Iphone or a Smartphone, to assist with this, we will be advising a variety of ways of reducing the power consumption of your device in a future newsletter.

Officers & Committee:

President: Betty Hudson 07 308 5210 027 235 0459 whatarau61@gmail.com

Secretary: Susan Anderson 021 116 9115 susananderson46@gmail.com

Treasurer: Brian Newton 07 307 7410 022 095 2862 brian.newton.nz@gmail.com

Membership

Secetary: Kate Ross 07 307 0374 021 147 2758 whakatanegreypower@gmail.com

Committee: Maud McKinnon

Rob Ross

Siva Panadam



Disclaimer:

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Prepared & Edited by Susan Anderson & Brian Newton

Membership Subscription Form

Mr / Mrs / Ms * (Please Circle One)

Given Name: _____ Family Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Landline 'Phone: _____

Membership No: (If Renewal) _____ Cell / Mobile: _____

Annual Membership Valid to March 31, 2018

\$15.00 Single Renewal / New ** (Please Circle One)
(\$16.00 if paying via cheque)
\$25.00 Double
(\$26.00 if paying via cheque)

Any donation to help with the cost of paper, postage and stationery would be greatly appreciated.

Subscription \$.....

Birth date - **(If under 50 Only)**

Donation \$.....

**To: Whakatane Grey Power
P.O. Box 830
Whakatane 3158**

Total Remitted \$.....

If you mail to our P.O. Box, it will assist us immensely if you could please include a stamped addressed envelope to cover the cost for mailing your Membership Card (s) and if paying by cash (Please note that we do not advise sending cash through the mail), your receipt. New members and membership renewals can also be undertaken via our website, simply click on the "Join Us" button and select from the sub menu accordingly.

Internet Banking

Payment can be made direct to our bank account via Internet Banking; details of our account together with the required details are as listed below; if you are a new member and paying via this method, and not using our website, please also send us an email to whakatanegreypower@gmail.com advising your details as listed above, including identifying how the amount paid is made up; i.e. if you are including a donation, please state the two amounts.

Account Name: Whakatane District Grey Power Association Inc.

Kiwibank Account Number: 38 9003 0986339 02

Details to Appear on Our Statement:

Particulars	Code **	Reference ***
Initials & Given Name	Renew / New	Membership Number
	** (Please Circle One)	*** (New Members Leave This Field Blank)

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