

# Momentum

New Zealand

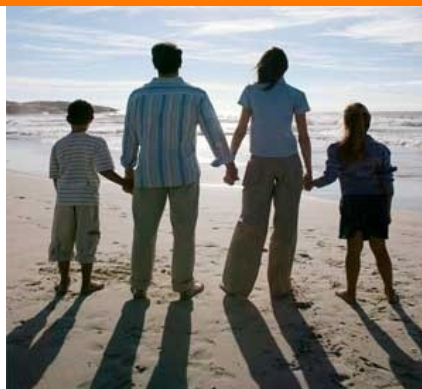
The Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society Newsletter

Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society  
www.msotago.org.nz  
Phone: (03) 455 5894  
Toll Free: 0508 MS OTAGO  
(0508 67 68 246)

**ms.**  

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**Otago**



8 Baker Street  
Caversham  
Dunedin 9012

## Manager

Tania McGregor  
021 1659 440  
tania@msotago.org.nz

## Development Coordinator

Liz Carroll-Lowe  
027 371 1836  
liz@msotago.org.nz

## Field Officer

Don Benn  
027 296 5254  
don@msotago.org.nz

## Patron

Dr John Mottershead

## Everest conquered for MS Otago

Lynne Clay our famous friendly Physiotherapist from Cromwell ran down Mount Everest 2 December 2011 and raised money along the way for our Society.

Here are some snippets of her emails she sent us while there:

4/11/11 - First day in Kathmandu - much cleaner than I remember but still mad! Off to Pokhara tomorrow to start a 10 day acclimatisation trip to Annapurna Sanctuary. Sounds like we may have to drive as local planes are not able to fly out of Kathmandu due to haze! I'm very excited about getting back into the mountains.

14/11/11 - We successfully finished our Annapurna Base Camp 8 day trek today. Great final training up, up, up, down, down, down some steep hills with many many stone steps of varying height! We were very lucky with the weather as it has been very hazy/low cloud for days but on our second day in the skies



*A great picture of Mt Everest over Lynnes right shoulder.*

cleared and these incredible mountains popped out of nowhere! We had amazing views as we climbed up high with the pinnacle being Annapurna Base Camp. Its raining again now so it's fingers crossed we can get

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# 2012

please be good to me

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back to the mountains next week and start our trek to Everest Base camp.

18/11/11 - Whole EM group bonding well after a few days in Kathmandu. We had a 12k fun run yesterday in fancy dress - the Kiwi contingent dressed as All Blacks complete with inflatable rugby ball! Good fun running down a hill though there were a few trips and spills with two girls having to have stitches! Spent today in the airport trying to get flights to Lukla to start our trek to the start line but all flights grounded due to snow and poor visibility

in Lukla so after spending 6.5 hrs in the airport we had to head back to our hotel - but of course we'd checked out and there was no room so now we are spread out all over Kathmandu! It's up at 4am again tomorrow to go back to the airport and fingers crossed the weather's improved and we get away!

21/11/11 - We made it to the mountains on the second attempt and have trekked up to Namche Bazaar where we spent the last 2 nights. It's great to be back - I have a big grin on my face! It's been great weather since we got here but very cold when that sun goes down! Off to race the Thamo loop today so we know the route at the end of the race and then off to Khumjung for our first night of camping! Not sure I'm looking forward to that after staying in the lodges!

28/11/11 - We are now 4 days until race

day! Internet access has been sparse but I am now in Pheriche about 10 miles from Everest base camp. Had a good acclimatisation trek up to Gokyo - experienced a few headaches from the altitude but apart from that have been well. Weather has been fantastic but big fluctuations in temperature from 27 to minus 10 so far! Now well on our way to Gorak Shep and looking forward to running back down to Namche - hope I'm still saying that on Fri am! Hopefully a victory email will follow on Sat!

2/12/11 - Victory is sweet - she did it - in under 9 hours!!! Way to go Lynne!!



If you want to hear more and to see Lynne's amazing photos then you need to come to our AGM on Monday 12 March 6pm at 8 Baker Street. No you won't get voted onto a committee or press ganged into any other role but you will get to hear and meet an inspirational woman who put herself to the

ultimate test. Please show your support for Lynne and her amazing effort by being there. Light refreshments will be served.

#### Disclaimer

The information in this newsletter is for the purpose of informing people about multiple sclerosis, events and interesting reading. The contents of this newsletter neither indicate or reflect the views of the Otago MS Society. You should not rely on any information produced in this newsletter in place of a visit, consultation or advice of a doctor or other qualified health provider.



## Power Cuts Ahead – Solution?

Last week, we had a power outage and we lost power for about 5 hours. We were scrambling around in the darkness, looking for matches, candles, flashlights, etc.

We looked outside, and noticed our solar lights shining brightly all around our patio, stairs, deck, etc, they looked beautiful. We walked outside, and brought several of the solar lights inside.

We stuck the solar light pipes into plastic drink bottles containers and they made the nicest, brightest, safest, lighting you could ever imagine. We put one in the bathroom, the kitchen and the living room. There was plenty of light. We have now put them all around our yard, they look nice and they do not attract flying bugs like the outdoor lights around our doorway.

The lights we have, fit into the small (20oz) water bottles and they also fit into most of the larger litre bottles. If you need a weight in the plastic bottle to keep them from tipping over, you can put a few of the pretty colourful "flat marbles" that you put in aquariums, and vases. (You can also use sand, aquarium gravel, or whatever you have available).

The lights we have were perfect inside our home. They should burn all night long if you need them.

The next day, you just take your solar lights back outside and they will instantly recharge and be ready for you to use again any time you need them.

Brilliant!



### National Fieldworkers Conference

Don attended the National Fieldworkers Conference held in Wellington in November where between 15-20 Fieldworkers attended from all over New Zealand. A variety of speakers and facilitators addressed the group on topics such as: sexuality and intimacy, anxiety and depression, and drug therapy. Putting faces to names was really helpful for Don who very much enjoyed being the only male there!

A four-year-old child, whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman, had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old Gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there.

When his mother asked him what he had said to the neighbour, the little boy just said, 'Nothing, I just helped him cry.'

# Brain Day 2012

DUNEDIN | FREE PUBLIC EVENT

Saturday 10 March | 10.00am - 4.00pm

Brain Day Dunedin is brought to you by the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand and the University of Otago as part of Brain Awareness Week.

## KEY SPEAKERS

10:30am

**Harnessing learning mechanisms to treat neurological disease**

⊕ Associate Professor

**John Reynolds**

Deputy Director  
Brain Health Research Centre  
Head of Translational Neuroscience  
Department of Anatomy  
University of Otago Medical School

Ongoing, collaborative research at the University of Otago is providing exciting new insights into normal brain learning mechanisms and how these can be applied to the treatment of neurological disease. Dr John Reynolds will review highlights of recent work including research into the mechanisms of stroke and Parkinson's disease and some potential new avenues of treatment that are in development at Otago. Dr Reynolds is a former Chapman Fellow of the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand and is currently the Chairman of the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Committee.

12:15pm

**Stem cells and the brain: discovery, myths and reality**

⊕ Associate Professor

**Bronwen Connor**

Neuroscientist and leading stem cell researcher  
Centre for Brain Research  
University of Auckland

Stem cell research is an exciting field that holds great promise for the future treatment of many diseases and injuries, including those of the brain. It is, however, a field that is surrounded by huge controversy, false promises and misinformation. Dr Bronwen Connor is a neuroscientist and an expert in stem cell research, and her presentation will demystify the issues surrounding this hot topic. Dr Connor will also update you about the exciting and groundbreaking research that has taken place in New Zealand, including her own breakthrough research with adult stem cells.

2:00pm

**The effects of proteins in the Alzheimer's brain – insights for future treatments**

⊕ Dr Margaret Ryan

Research Fellow  
Department of Anatomy, University of Otago

Alzheimer's disease is an incurable, degenerative disease currently affecting over 35,000 New Zealanders. Because of our ageing population, it is projected that 10 per cent of the population will be affected by 2050. Extensive Alzheimer's research at the University of Otago and in other leading universities around the world has been focused on a protein in the brain known as amyloid- $\beta$  as the possible cause due to its toxicity in brain cells. In conjunction with this critical work at Otago, a focus of Dr Margaret Ryan's research has been investigating another protein's involvement in the Alzheimer's disease process – this protein protects against damage to cells and supports memory processes. In this lecture, Dr Ryan will outline her most recent study of this intriguing protein, and talk about the potential it holds for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

## SEMINARS

11.45am

**Stroke Foundation of New Zealand  
Is it a stroke? Act FAST!**

How can you tell if someone is having a stroke? This seminar will teach you the signs and symptoms of stroke that usually come on very suddenly. By learning to recognise the symptoms of stroke you could save a life! Learn the FAST check (Face, Arms, Speech, Time).

1.30pm

**Alzheimer's New Zealand  
Caring for the Carer**

Caring for someone with dementia can be an intensive, challenging and rewarding experience all at once. It is important you do not try to manage alone – there are services available to help you from health professionals and social services. This seminar will take you through the support options available and provide some key tools to ensure the wellbeing of you, your family, and the person you are caring for.

### Displays and information

Various community support groups and the Neurological Foundation will have staff present at information stands during the day – feel free to chat with staff before and after lectures.

**Brain waves: Demonstrations throughout the day of how brain waves are recorded**

**Plastinated brain display**

No bookings required to attend lectures. Please arrive early to secure your seating – our key speakers have attracted large numbers at past events. For further information, go to [www.brainweek.co.nz](http://www.brainweek.co.nz) or phone 0508 BRAINS (0508 272 467).



NEUROLOGICAL  
FOUNDATION  
OF NEW ZEALAND



BRAIN DAY DUNEDIN | ST DAVID LECTURE THEATRE COMPLEX, UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO  
CORNER OF ST DAVID AND CASTLE STREETS, DUNEDIN



## Famous People with M.S.

I just learned today about Stephen White, the best-selling author, who has MS. Some of his books include, *The Siege*; which is now in bookstores (as of Aug 2009), and the 17th in a series of psychological thrillers. *Dead Time*, *Kill Me*, and *Higher Authority* are a few of his other titles. Now I'm not much of a mystery/thriller/action book reader, but if you like this kind of thing, you may want to check him out.

His main character, **Dr. Alan Gregory**, has a wife – **Lauren Crowder** - who also has multiple sclerosis. Even though it effects her differently than it does him, he knows first hand how to write about this sometimes debilitating disease – he has it!

He uses his books to help readers understand what multiple sclerosis is. I think this is a pretty neat way to help others learn about any disease or condition.

Stephen White was born in Long Island but grew up in New York, New Jersey, and also Southern California. He attended college in California where he dropped out of a creative writing class after just three weeks! Now he's a New York Times best-selling author of 17 books – go figure!

Winter reading perhaps?

### Texting for Senior Folk

*The kids have all their texting codes...like*

BFF - Best Friends Forever

OTT - Over The Top

LOL - Laughing Out Loud

*So why not some codes for seniors:*

ATD - At the Doctor's

BTW - Bring the Wheelchair

BYOT - Bring Your Own Teeth

FWIW - Forgot Where I Was

FYI - Found Your Insulin

GGPBL - Gotta Go, Pacemaker Battery Low

GHA - Got Heartburn Again

HGBM - Had Good Bowel Movement

IMHO - Is My Hearing-Aid On?

LMDO - Laughing My Dentures Out

LOL - Living on Lipitor

OMSG - Oh My! Sorry, Gas

ROFL...CGU - Rolling on the Floor Laughing...Can't get Up!

WAITT - Who Am I Talking To?

WTFA - Wet the Furniture Again

WTP - Where's the Prunes?

WWNO - Walker Wheels Need Oil

GGLKI - Gotta Go, Laxative Kicking in!

## Presidents Report

I can hardly believe its February already and the Otago MS Society's AGM is occurring in a few weeks.

It seems only yesterday since our last AGM and this is a measure of how busy the Society has been over the last year.

2011 has been a very productive year for the members, staff and committee of the OMMS and an enjoyable one as President.

There have been a number of challenges for the staff but they have coped brilliantly with these in a very positive way for the Society. This has made the job of being President and a committee member all the more enjoyable.

At the 2011 AGM we proposed some changes to the constitution to align it more directly with the current operating procedure of the Society and these changes were approved at this AGM however after further discussion with the Society solicitor, Chris Lucas of Lucas and Lucas we agreed that the constitution had become further disjointed with amendments upon amendments on amendments, and so we agreed under his advice to review the document further and align the old constitution with a more concise complete document that brings all of the updates and amendments made over the last 30 plus years, together.

The Incorporated Society Act 1908 our Society is registered under, has changed little since then, but they have also included some stricter controls within the Act that needed to be included as well. Mostly these are to do with any person receiving a benefit of any kind from a Society.

The Committee will be proposing to adopt the now tidy and rationalised constitution and subsequently register the revised document following the AGM. We have tried to future proof the Society as best we can to ensure that the new constitution is as relevant and up to date

as possible.

The old constitution had mention of many different standing committees which over time have changed as the operation has grown and expanded from a largely volunteer to an organisation where many of its core functions are carried out by paid staff. As a result of this many responsibilities have shifted from unpaid volunteer roles to paid staff roles and the constitution needed to reflect this.

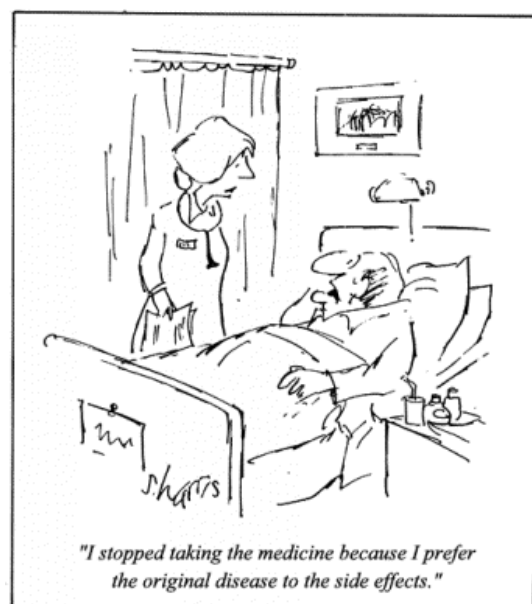
The Society has also secured the purchase of a dedicated van for the transportation of members to Society events. The van has been funded almost entirely by applications to charitable trusts, donations and a variety of fundraising events and is a fantastic achievement.

Over the years many committee members and others have raised the possibility of the Society having its own van and finally this has come to pass.

All in all 2011 was a very good year for the Society possibly the best I can remember and I have been involved with the society since 1996.

It has been a great effort all round by staff, committee and members and I know that 2012 will be even better.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM.



## Stress Not Linked to Increased Multiple Sclerosis Risk

A new study by Harvard School of Public Health researchers and colleagues finds that stress does not appear to increase a person's risk of developing multiple sclerosis (MS). The research is published in the May 31, 2011, print issue of *Neurology*.

"While we've known that stressful life events have been shown to increase the risk of MS episodes, we weren't certain whether these stressors could actually lead to developing the disease itself," said first author Trond Riise, of the University of Bergen in Bergen, Norway, who conducted the research as a visiting scholar at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Researchers studied two groups of female nurses from the Nurses' Health Study. The first group of 121,700 nurses between the ages of 30 and 55 were followed starting in 1976. The second group of 116,671 nurses between the ages of 25 and 42 were followed from 1989. Participants were asked to report general stress at home and at work, including physical and sexual abuse in childhood and as teenagers. Of the first group, 77 people developed MS by 2005. In the second group, 292 people developed the disease by 2004.

After considering factors such as age, ethnicity, latitude of birth, body mass at age 18 and smoking, the study found that severe stress at home did not increase the risk of developing MS. There was also no significant increased risk among those who reported severe physical or sexual abuse during childhood or adolescence.

"This rules out stress as a major risk factor for MS. Future research can now focus on repeated and more fine-tuned measures of stress," said Riise.

### How to Look Good Naked!

Many of you have seen the lovely MS Otago earrings that some of us wear. We originally had 6 pairs made to auction at the 2011 Wobbly Art Exhibition, however so many people said that they would like a pair that we had another 20 made. Since then we have sold the grand total of – NONE!!!

We have made a financial investment in the production of these based on requests from our members and are now left out of pocket with 20 pairs of unsold earrings.

They are funky and the colours make them accessorise with virtually anything. They support an awesome cause, are inexpensive @ only \$25.00 and are good conversation starters. We get lots of positive comments when we wear ours – so how about it? Christmas has come and gone and so has Valentine's Day – maybe an Easter gift or birthday gift or maybe just a no reason gift.

Contact Tania to request yours now.



### 2012 DIARY PENS (with a pull out calendar)

WE HAVE PENS!  
Over 3000 (yes that's right – 3000!!) of them to sell.

These make a great gift. Are you self employed and have lots of staff you want to give a small token of your appreciation to, at the same time supporting a worthy cause? Or maybe you



know of a store that would put them on display in our professionally made pen boxes.

## NZ Masters Games PushPlay 5km Walk

On Wednesday 8 Feb at 6pm, 12 competitors with either Multiple Sclerosis or other neurological conditions lined up to compete in the NZ Masters Games 5km walk. Supported by MS staff, volunteers and some family members all decked out in orange tee-shirts bearing the slogan "I survived the NZ Masters Games 5km walk" over 30 of us lined up at the start line. 6 walkers who hoped to walk the whole 5km but unsure if they could make it, were paired with a volunteer with an empty wheelchair "just in case"; 5 were in power chairs and 1 in a self-propelled wheelchair although he did get a little help, especially up the hill.

The photos tell most of the story but can't fully show the determination, courage, spirit and utter jubilation felt when each of our competitors crossed the finish line. Stephen was first man home from the MS team in just 47 minutes. The watching crowd in the stand numbering in excess of 200 people, stood and clapped and cheered each of our people as they entered the final lap home. Some were very wobbly and barely staggered over the finish line but they did it – walked 5km without using a wheelchair. At the finish line some competitors cried, some supporters cried and even Don had dust in his eyes. Everyone was bursting with pride at the awesome achievements of so many. Mel got a bronze medal in the 30-35yr age bracket and had it presented by NZ Masters Games patron Dick Taylor.

Those in power chairs had their own stresses through the race including difficulty in keeping their hands on their power stick, difficulty in concentrating on steering and managing the areas of rough terrain – so they had no easy ride and it was every bit as much of a challenge for them as it was for the walkers!

Next day everyone was tired but still jubilant. Comments from people included;

*"That's the first time in years I have actually achieved something"*

*"I can't believe I did it"*

*"That was so much fun"*

*"Everyone was so supportive it was cool to be part of"*

*"When are we starting fundraising to get to Wanganui for the next games?"*

Thank you to everyone who took part and made it such a wonderful experience. A huge thanks to Bendigo Valley Sports & Charity Foundation for making it possible and Dr Cath Smith from the University of Otago School of Physiotherapy for the support and preparation of the training programmes.

Next time when we ask – think about, say yes and do it!! We know you can.

Check out the rest of the photos on our website: [www.msotago.org.nz](http://www.msotago.org.nz).

**We gratefully acknowledge  
the generous support of:**



**St Kilda Community  
Sports Society**



**Otago Health Care Charitable Trust**







It's hard to believe that February has arrived already, and that Christmas has been and gone for another year, I hope that you all managed to spend some time with family and loved ones and there was at least one present under the tree for you!



*Tania McGregor  
Manager*

The team and I are back on deck and we are hitting the ground running, with two new programmes we wish to implement during 2012, we hope that you will find them informative, interesting and supportive, we have 2 BBQ's in March to raise funds for the Society, Expo's in Dunedin and Balcutha to raise awareness in the community, and many more things to keep us busy!!!

I am happy to announce that the much anticipated van is not too far away, we have approximately \$ 10,000 to raise which is to assist with the van refurbishment, Liz is currently working on another funding application to assist with the balance, so we have our fingers and toes crossed for another successful outcome which will then allow us to move forward and arrange for our van to become more of a reality.

It is with great sadness that after 6 years running we have had to cancel this year's Wobbly Art Exhibition, it is extremely unfortunate that due to a number of artists currently experiencing relapses from their MS, it has resulted in them being unable to produce their normal amount of art pieces for the exhibition. We have however devised an alternative plan, and that is to still have available during the week of 21-25 May 2012, displaying what artwork has been produced, and have these on display in the hospital foyer

## From our Staff

and available for sale, (we are just working through the finer details at the moment and will advise you all once everything has been put in place). We hope that you may be able to view this artwork, and perhaps you may even find a piece of amazing artwork to have at your place!

The family travelled to Nelson to continue chasing the sunshine, but for the first time in 5 years, I have to say that the weather in Dunedin was hotter (just don't tell my mum and dad)! I was surprised to see on our arrival to my parent's house that my nana who I hadn't seen in 3 years had flown with my uncle from Whangarei to surprise me, Pete and the girls, my sister and her 3 children. At one stage there were 12 of us staying at mum's, can you imagine the noise of constant chitter chatter, laughter, fighting, and the chaos of having 12, 10, 5, 4, and 1 year kids running through the house, and how much mischief they got up to at the dinner table!

It was wonderful to spend time with my family, and especially to spend some quality time with my nana, but as the saying goes "all good things must come to an end", so after 10 days away it was time we packed up the car, the girls, Indy (my dog) and started the long drive home. Upon arrival in Dunedin we were welcomed with wonderful sunshine again!

I am looking forward to sharing another year with you all, so if you have any ideas please share these with us either by phone or email, if someone you know is unwell please let us know, if you have a funny story to tell please share, who knows maybe we could even publish it in the next newsletter.

Christmas for me was a quiet affair. Nothing wrong with quiet – in fact we took ourselves off for a picnic to Waipori Falls. It was a great day but I am reminded that the happy, full-on-family, all the bells and whistles Christmas's we see on TV are not the reality for most people and for some, these images leave only a feeling of disappointment, loneliness and longing that their own circumstances were different. Whatever your Christmas was, I hope you experienced some peace and joy within yourself for that is an amazing gift that we can give to ourselves! No wrapping required....



Liz Carroll-Lowe  
Development  
Coordinator

Scott passed his NCEA Level One



*Christmas day picnic with Scott testing out the headphones Santa bought him.*

Endorsed with Merit so we had great jubilation mid-January when the results were posted on-line. We celebrated by going to the movies to see the new Muppet movie and for those

of you who haven't seen it - you must. It is good old fashioned entertainment full of belly laughs and genuine humour. So if you can't get to the movies, on rainy day in winter when you are feeling a bit down – get out the DVD and **laugh**. The "Are you a Man or a Muppet" song is a highlight and I'm not sure why my thoughts turned to Don at this point???? I sat through the whole movie singing to all the songs with Ryker (my 9yr old foster son) who knew them all, and 16y

old Scott who was too cool to sing...

We have got many new programmes planned this year at work and I am looking forward to helping implement them. It's exciting to watch the growth in the Society and in its members. Taking part alongside our people in the NZ Master Games 5km Walk was a personal highlight and one of the most inspiring and proud moments of my life. At the finish line there wasn't a dry eye in the house as each time one of our people wobbled across the finish line the whole grandstand erupted into applause and cheering. It was an amazingly supportive atmosphere. Then someone suggested we could get a team together to do it all again in Wanganui in 2013..... all I can say, is that we would need to cook a heck of a lot of BBQs to raise money for that. But who knows?

Well it's great to be back at work after a lovely two weeks spent with my entire family in Alexandra, Central Otago over Christmas. You would think we would be getting a little tired of going up to Alex with last year's holiday being the 42<sup>nd</sup> year in a row we have holidayed up there.



Pam Macdonald  
Health Officer

Two weeks ago I participated in the Master Games 5 km walk which I thoroughly enjoyed; the thrill of the night for me was completing and finishing last with Denise, what an experience!

*Art washes away from the soul, the dust of everyday life.*



## “What I’ve Benn up to.”

Happy New Year to you all. I hope that you have had a good summer, and possibly a break away for some of you. I spent a week in Naseby over Christmas, then spent a few days in Pleasant Point (inland from Timaru on the way to Fairlie – but *fairlie* close to Timaru)- (for those that missed it that was some of Don’s brand of humour!!) and in Christchurch. It was great to catch up and reconnect with our Christchurch friends. We have been told that our house in Christchurch should be fixed sometime in the next four years. So we wait... My wife passed her 2<sup>nd</sup> year medical school with distinction, and was also given a Dean’s commendation on her work. She is incredibly talented and is a source of great learning among her peers when they don’t understand what has been taught. Our three children had a great holiday. My two boys got the fishing bug and so I took them to a jetty down near Macandrew Bay and had great success – including my 7 year old catching a young shark. They have settled well back into school, reviving old friendships, and making some new ones with the new arrivals at school. Our 5 year old was even awarded a certificate for kindness as he stuck with a new arrival in his class and helped him get familiar with life in a new school.

I began back at work on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> Jan and my first task was to sift through a long list of emails. As I write this, two weeks after I returned, I realise that I have had contact with 6 new people. A couple have transferred from another region and want to remain connected to a local society. A couple are newly diagnosed, and another couple are seeking advice and information for the first time since being diagnosed. We also



*Don Benn  
Field Officer*

had the Masters Games 5km walk on the 8<sup>th</sup> February, which you will read more about elsewhere in the newsletter. I just want to say how proud I am of our competitors and of the fact that I work for people such as these. Perseverance, determination, goal setting, achieving, enthusiasm, friendship. These words only begin to describe the team who entered the 5km walk. And to also see the support of family, friends, carers and the crowd at the finish line – it was truly heart-warming.

I have recently had a couple of emails or calls letting me know that someone is in ISIS, or DPH and I really appreciate these. If you know you are going to be in ISIS, or you end up in DPH, or know one of our clients who is, please let me know because each of you is important to us and if it suits then I would love to visit.

We are working hard at getting the groups going again, and starting up some new groups. The Monday, Tuesday, Mosgiel, Men’s, Oamaru & Alexandra Groups are flying again. We are currently assessing whether to continue the small Balclutha group or to focus on home visits. More to come on that one. New groups are going to start up in March.

In recent weeks as I have been about visiting, I have met a few mothers with MS who have younger children. By this I mean primary school age and below. A couple of these mothers have asked me whether a group for mothers with MS is likely. At this stage I have indicated that I am not currently aware of many who do have young children. However, if there were sufficient numbers to create and support a group then I would encourage it. In the meantime I am more than happy to connect mothers with other mothers with young children. If you would like to be put in touch with others, then please let me know.

Finally (and I hear you say, ‘Phew’, after the lengthy report I submitted for the last

*(Continued on page 13)*

newsletter) I am working on contacting all of you who indicated to me last year that you would like a visit early in 2012. I want to wish you all the best for the year ahead, and look forward to catching up at some stage.

## *Multiple Sclerosis*

*By Dr. Suess*

*I love MS it's  
just so neat  
the way it  
swept me off  
my feet  
I love the pain,  
I love the numb  
and sticking  
needles in my  
bum.*

*I love the way  
my world's a blur  
the way I shake , the words I slur.  
I love my chair and walker , too  
I love MS ....I do.. I do...*

*I love my lazy sleepy days  
I shake with joy within my haze  
I'm just as happy as can be  
It makes me pee and pee and pee*

*I love my legs that will not walk  
my twisted tongue that will not talk  
I love the way my poop does bind  
I do believe I've lost my mind*



## **Wobbly Art Exhibition 2012**

It is with great sadness we advise that the 2012 Wobbly Art Exhibition has been cancelled. As entries were due in, it became very clear that we did not have enough artwork to ensure a successful exhibition.

Unfortunately many of our regular artists are experiencing significant relapses or progression in their illness which has made it difficult for them to complete a variety of art work or in some cases none at all. This is the first time since the exhibitions inception that we have had to make this decision but sadly, it is part of living in a world with Multiple Sclerosis.

For the exhibition to be economically viable the Society needs a certain number of pieces of art to sell. With reduced numbers of artwork in the exhibition it would affect our bottom line and the projected budget indicated the Society could make a significant loss on this year's exhibition. We are simply not in a position to be able to do absorb any loss.

We know that many of you look forward to our annual exhibition so please, accept our deepest apologies.

We are working on the concept of a much smaller exhibition, around our World MS Day events in Dunedin on May 23. It is hoped to have a small display in the foyer of the public hospital with all art work for sale. This is still being negotiated and as it is a first we have no idea how successful it would be in terms of sales – but it is keeping Multiple Sclerosis out there in the eyes of the community.

We are sure that you will be as disappointed as we are, but you can see that the circumstances are beyond our control.

Thanks all of you for supporting our Wobbly Art Exhibition over previous years – it's been awesome!



*Linzi (right) shares a laugh with Nancye at Tuesday group*

Meet Linzi Murray one of our Volunteers who supports our Monday and Tuesday groups. Linzi has been with us for six months and has become an important member of the MS team.

Linzi and her husband Iain are in New Zealand on sabbatical for 12 months, leaving their home in Cornwall, UK. Iain works as a Gastroenterologist at Dunedin Public Hospital and back home Linzi works as a Higher Education Enabler.

Since arriving here they spend a lot of time travelling around New Zealand most weekends getting to see as much of the country as possible. One of their special memories whilst in New Zealand was flying to Milford Sound and participating in an overnight cruise there. They both found it a tremendous experience.

Some of the interesting things Linzi has noticed about NZ compared to the UK is that there seems to be a lot less dogs, food prices are much, much higher here (don't we all know that!) and so are the price of books. (It's actually cheaper for Linzi to purchase a book in the UK and get it sent to New Zealand rather than purchase one here). When Linzi leaves New Zealand she says she will miss the wildlife, penguins and dolphins most, as it's such a thrill to be able to see these things and to get so close to them. She reflects that her stay here has been an amazing opportunity.

When asked what she misses about the UK Linzi answers immediately saying, that she misses having her own possessions

and has struggled with renting having other people's tastes and furnishings around her. She has found New Zealand people to be extremely friendly and helpful especially over the last few weeks since her husband Iain broke his foot. Linzi is with us till June 2012 when she and Iain return to the UK.

*Jean proudly displays the L plates made for her as she adjusts to life in an electric wheelchair.*



## Room For Hire

The Day Room @ 8 Baker Street, Caversham, Dunedin is available to hire for your meeting, training session, lecture or function.

This versatile, light room can be set up to suit your individual needs whether it be for 5 or 50 people.

The venue is completely wheelchair friendly including the ablution area which has a disabled friendly shower unit.

Heat pumps provide a warm atmosphere on cold days and wide sliding windows help cool the room on a hot day.

Baker Street is in a quiet suburb, on a main bus route and provides off street parking for up to 15 cars.

Bookings are available during the day on some week days, most evenings and weekends.

Viewings to confirm suitability for your function are available by appointment.

Your hire fee contributes towards the work of the Otago Multiple Sclerosis Society in the community.



## Memory retraining using mSMT increases cerebral activation in MS patients

*New study shows changes go beyond behavioral, affecting how brain processes information.*

Neuroscientists at Kessler Foundation have documented increased cerebral activation in patients with multiple sclerosis (MS) following memory retraining using the modified Story Memory Technique (mSMT). This is the first study to demonstrate that behavioral interventions can have a positive effect on brain function in MS, an important step in validating the clinical utility of cognitive rehabilitation. According to Nancy Chiaravalloti, PhD, director of Neuropsychology & Neuroscience Research at Kessler Foundation, "This demonstrates that an effective cognitive rehabilitation protocol can lead to changes in the way the brain is actually processing information." Dr. Chiaravalloti is lead author of the article, which was published online by the *Journal of Neurology* on January 12. Cognitive deficits are a common cause of disability in MS, though few studies have examined the efficacy of memory retraining in this population. Previous research conducted at Kessler Foundation demonstrated that mSMT improves new learning and memory in MS.

The new study utilised functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to document brain activation patterns before and after memory retraining. In the double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomized clinical trial, 16 individuals were randomly assigned to treatment (n = 8) or placebo (n = 8) groups. Each underwent 10 memory retraining sessions (twice weekly for 5 weeks). After treatment, greater activation was evident on fMRI in the treatment group during performance of a memory task; no change was seen in the placebo group. Increased activation was associated with improved memory performance. These benefits may warrant third-party reimbursement for this intervention in selected patients.



### In Memoriam

It is with great fondness that we acknowledge the passing of Nessie Sinclair. Nessie was a valued and active member of our Society for many years. One of the last things Nessie did before she died was to make a decorated window crystal for the Society. It hangs in the day room bringing rainbows, memories and smiles to all. We know that Nessie is now in a place where MS does not exist and that she's up there puffing away on her cigarette - without having to use the peg!

## New Groups – Which One for You?

This year in response to *many* requests we are establishing some new groups.

One is to be called **GYMS** – and no it is not a physio/exercise class! (*You guys would all show Don up*) It stands for Group for Young MSers. Young people here, being defined as aged 40 and under.



We know that the experiences of this age bracket who have MS are different to others and having grown up in a social media

explosive age, your methods of finding information will be very different but we all still need at some time, the support of others face-to-face who share in some way, what we have.

Feedback during Dons client visits last year was that a number of people in this age bracket are still working full or part time and cannot attend a day group. So on **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 7:00pm** we invite you to join us at 8 Baker Street for an informal gathering. Have a think about what form you would like such a group to take? Would you like to meet over a meal out somewhere? Would you like to have lots of social events? Or are you interested in just getting to know one another over a coffee? It's not our group it's yours, so get those ideas flowing. We look forward to welcoming you on the 7<sup>th</sup>!

We are very excited to launch our second new group in March which will meet every second month. **Family TIES** (Technology, Information, Education, and Support) is an informal group for the family members of those with Multiple Sclerosis or other neurological illness and is an



opportunity to get together for educational/social times. While this is predominantly directed at adult family members it is hoped to occasionally have full, all aged family activities. The first gathering is on **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March at 7:00pm** at 8 Baker Street in Caversham. Don't be shy about coming along – it will be new for everyone and there are no strangers here - only friends we haven't met yet.

## Living a Health Life with Multiple Sclerosis

On Thursday June 14 we start a 6-week course (*subject to Liz securing funding*) called *Living a Healthy Life with MS*. We have sourced experienced facilitators who are specialists in their fields to deliver an interesting and varied programme. The course will cover the following topics:

- Week One – Managing your Grief
- Week Two – Exercise Friend or Foe and Nutrition & Supplements
- Week Three – Financial Independence
- Week Four – Managing Relationships
- Week Five – Illness Progression – What happens next?
- Week Six - Life's Little Questions – Panel Forum

If you are interested in attending this course or know someone who would be please let Don know and he can send out more information. Numbers may have to be limited so first in first served.

## Computer Courses

We hope to run two sets of computer courses this year (April and August) to provide an opportunity to learn better search options and computer techniques. The courses will be two sessions of 3 hours each and may carry a small cost. Computers can help lessen the daily isolation for those confined to home and we hope this course will provide the information you need to improve your

computer skills. Several basic things will be covered like, email, Skype, spam etc but there will be a period of time when your particular queries can be discussed and sorted out. Again we have an experienced tutor and are still to confirm where it will be run but hopefully within one of the local schools computer rooms. Again if you are interested in attending either of these courses we need to know now because numbers here are strictly limited to 10 per group. Further information including venue, dates and times will then be sent to you.

## World MS Day – Wednesday 23 May 2012

Watch our website for information about events and activities happening at this time.

I had originally planned for this episode of Geek Street to be full of useful advice about buying a new computer. However for anyone using a computer for email, web browsing, letter writing and the odd game of solitaire, any computer on the shelves today will do the job and any appliance or computer shop can sell you one. So instead I've chosen focus on equipment and tips to make YOUR computer easier to use.



### Keyboard

For anyone with movement or flexibility issues a normal keyboard can be an instrument of torture. Instead have a look at "Ergonomic" styles. While originally made for full-time typists the design will assist anyone with wrist pain or stiffness.



**Mouse** There are a huge range of shapes

for mice and trackballs. My best advice is find a shop that has them out on display and try them. A quick hint—try a mouse designed for computer gamers,



ridiculous as some of them may look. They are made to be used for hours at a time and many are adjustable to fit your hand. (Also worth huge brownie points with the grandkids)



**Monitor** Get as large as you can afford. If you still use the one that came with your computer it's definitely time to upgrade. You then have two options, leave it at the standard settings and have lots of space, or increase the text size and make everything easier to see.



**Microphone, Webcam** If you're not up to typing friends and family a huge newsy email, how about Skyping them. Either phone call or video can be a great way to catch up without any cost.

Don't forget that if you have a laptop all of these options are still available to you.

Finally, any modern computer has a range of options and utilities available to you to make use easier. Finding you often hit keys twice without meaning to? Adjust the keyboard repeat delay. Find the mouse a bit twitchy and hard to click on buttons? Change the pointer speed and increase the pointer size. You can even set the computer up to work without a mouse or without a keyboard.

If you are buying new hardware, ask to be shown how to adjust these setting, otherwise GIYF (Google Is Your Friend). Anyway have fun and I'll see you on the Inter Webz. *Steve*





# HELP WANTED

(Continued from page 19)

seller's account with a \$10 deposit (like TradeMe). When they choose you as their charity you get \$5 while your supporters keep the full \$10 in their account to spend.

So we suggest that you encourage your supporters to:

Sign up to sell items in the Garage Sale and choose you as their charity (an immediate \$5 donation).

Auction off an item in the Garage Sale on your behalf. That way you get the \$5 we donate, your share of the commission, and if they sold on your behalf - the proceeds from their garage sale item.

Buy an item in the Buy Now section -- we have lots of great deals and every purchase over \$40 is a \$1 donation to you plus a share of the commission! The Buy Now section has some of the best prices in New Zealand.

If that's not already enough, USave have also pledged to donate a further One Million Dollars to charity! We will accumulate another 10% of our commissions until One Million Dollars is raised for charity! USave will hold an event to present several donations totaling One Million Dollars to a few lucky Charities.

USave has pledged another 15% of its commissions to be spent on prizes and giveaways for our Shoppers.

In total USave is giving away 50% of its commissions to New Zealand Charities, Non Profits, Schools and Shoppers!

So come on Kiwis get behind this great cause. Use the USave site whenever you can; save money and help your community!



## Not Quite Masterchef

We have several fundraising opportunities coming up in the next month to grab that ever elusive but vitally important "untagged" money and we are in need of some help please.

Thanks to Sandra who helped Liz staff our catering stand at the **Raise It Up Taieri Youth Showcase on Saturday 25 February**. It was a good opportunity to raise our profile on the Taieri.

We need people to help at our next event and to cook on the BBQ at **Bunning's Community Fun Day on Saturday 10 March**. We will be there from approx 10am-4pm and we need 3 people on at a time all day.

On **Saturday 24 March we have the BBQ booked at Mitre 10 Mega** from 10am-4pm. Again we need people who are able to assist in cooking on the BBQ and we need 3 people on at a time all day.

If you can help with any of the above for 2-3 hours please talk to Liz asap. We can't do these things without your help.



ALEXANDRA Lions Club have been big supporters of our Society helping with the Annual Street Appeal and other activities in the Central Otago Area.

We are very grateful for their previous and on-going support.



## ***The new website could be of real financial benefit to the Otago MS Society– but it needs You!***

About Us

Why are you reading our boring "history" when you could be shopping?

Well if you have time to kill, here's the story:

The USave team met around four years before launching this website and letting everyone see and try out our attempt to change/improve the world.

We started out with an idea to change the way people find and buy a few products. Using the internet and some really neat marketing methods, we were sure that we could reduce the costs of purchasing, marketing, sales and distribution on a few products, allowing us to sell them at really low prices. The more time that we spent on it, the more products we added. Soon we realised that our concept could save many people money on as many products as we had time to handle. Then we realized that if we involved other businesses, we really could offer just about everything to everybody at really good prices.

USave Money Limited was formed to open (insert trumpet fanfare here) the [www.usave.co.nz](http://www.usave.co.nz) online shopping centre. Our mission statement from the very beginning has been: **WE EXIST TO SAVE YOU MONEY!**

Then we started thinking, saving other people money is great, but wouldn't it be even better if USave could benefit the New Zealand community and our shoppers. We hope to grow pretty fast as the word gets around, and with our Charity supporters helping to get the word out, we hope everyone in New Zealand will hear about us and the money will start flowing back to community.

At USave our mission statement is "We exist to save you money and benefit the community". Our goal is to be the largest generator of charitable donations in the country (outside of the New Zealand government)!

On the page are the category links to Registered Charities, Non Profits and Schools that have registered with USave. More are joining all the time. They will benefit from every purchase made by USave Shoppers.

When Shoppers join USave they will be asked to choose a Registered Charity, Non Profit or School to support. Once they start shopping, every time they make a purchase USave will donate 25% of our commission fee to their chosen cause. If the item is worth \$40 or more in our New Products section, the Merchant will donate \$1 to the Shopper's chosen cause. When a shopper starts to sell their second hand items in our Garage Sale, USave will donate \$5 to the Registered Charity, Non Profit or School of their choice. In addition when any Garage Sale item sells USave will donate 25% of our commission fee to the sellers chosen cause!

**<http://www.usave.co.nz/MS-Otago>**

Please use this link in your newsletters and email correspondence with your supporters. As we discussed, the best way to start generating ongoing donations from the USave site is to have your supporters register to sell an item online. They open a

*(Continued on page 18)*

## Erskine House

Scott and I spent 3 days of our summer holiday at Erskine House in Frankton, Queenstown. The Erskine Holiday Home is owned and operated by the Southland Multiple Sclerosis Society and is available for hire to anyone with Multiple Sclerosis or a financial member of any MS Society.

I had heard good things about the house but I wasn't sure what to expect so it was with some nervousness as we approached the house. Wow what a wonderful surprise! Driving up the drive and parking under the carport we entered the wide door into the laundry area. This

bright sunny room boasts a vertical freezer, washing machine and dryer. Stored here are the bed lift, wheelchair, wheelchair commode, walking frame, laundry basket and cleaning items.

Entering the wide hallway which is lined with wood grain

wallboard to prevent rips and tears commonly associated with wheelchair use and walls, you immediately notice that nearly all the doors are sliding doors, light and easy to use.

Off the hallway there is a single toilet at normal height, two bedrooms and the bathroom. The bathroom again is a large room with a wet floor area. Two mirrors, one at normal height and one at wheelchair height which is the same as the basin unit, grace the walls as do the many handrails to provide support at any angle.

The third bedroom is also off the hallway facing the front of the house and has two single beds with continental blankets and plenty of spare woollen blankets for those winter nights. Every wardrobe in every bedroom holds hidden treasure – a selection of books, puzzles and games to

suit every age.

The second bedroom off the hallway also has two single beds, one of which is an electric hospital bed for those that need assistance to sit up in bed. Even with built in drawers and wardrobe this room is still larger than average and captures all the morning sun.

A glass sliding door leads into the kitchen which has an oval Formica table and seating for 8. The kitchen window looks right up the lake to Queenstown, so cooking here is an absolute delight. The kitchen is fully equipped (better than mine at home) with a slow cooker,

microwave, full range and every piece of cutlery and crockery you could ever need while on holiday. There is also a fridge and radio.

The lounge is warm, sunny and spacious. Two couches again slightly higher than normal, a bean bag and an electric armchair form part of the comfort

zone along with a large digital TV that even those with the worst eyesight will be able to see. A DVD player is also provided and a couple of children's DVDs. A selection of magazines more recent than the ones you would probably find in your doctors waiting room, await your interest on the coffee table, two meal trays on wheels are available for those who need them. The lounge gets sun all afternoon and evening and is a lovely place to relax and unwind.

Off the lounge is the conservatory which is a lovely place to sit and have breakfast even in your dressing gown – after all no one knows you up there!

The master bedroom leads off the lounge and has an awesomely comfortable queen size bed. There are raisers for the bed feet if it is too low for you. A radio and



*(Continued on page 26)*



## FDA Warns Against Illegal Stem Cell Treatments

The FDA (Food & Drug Ass) is warning consumers that any stem cell treatment they are considering must be approved by FDA or studied under a clinical investigation that has been submitted to and allowed to proceed by FDA.

According to the FDA, stem cells, sometimes called the body's "master cells," are the precursor cells that develop into blood, brain, bones and all the body's organs, with the potential to repair, restore, replace and regenerate cells that could then be used to treat many medical conditions and diseases.

Stem cell therapies are used to treat diseases or conditions for which few treatments exist.

The FDA noted that the only stem cell product by the FDA so far is Hemacord, a cord blood-derived product manufactured by the New York Blood Center and used for specified indications in patients with disorders affecting the body's blood-forming system.

The FDA has recently participated in activity to fight illegal activity involving stem cells. The agency noted that in December 2011, three men were arrested and charged with 15 counts of criminal activity related to manufacturing, selling and using stem cells without FDA sanction or approval.

One of the accused three was a licensed midwife who operated a maternity care clinic in Texas.

The midwife took umbilical cords from birth mothers and told them it was for research. Meanwhile she was selling the umbilical cord blood to a laboratory in Arizona which, in turn, sent the blood to a paid consultant at a university in South Carolina.

The consultant, an assistant professor, used university facilities to manufacture stem cell products, the FDA said. He then sold them to a man representing himself as a physician licensed in the U.S. The man then traveled to Mexico to perform unapproved stem cell procedures on people suffering from cancer, multiple sclerosis and other autoimmune diseases.

The three defendants were reported to have received more than \$1.5 million from patients seeking treatment for incurable diseases.

"Scammers like these offer false hope to people with incurable diseases in order to line their own pockets with money," says Special Agent in Charge Patrick J. Holland of FDA's Office of Criminal Investigations (OCI), Kansas City Field Office.

"FDA will continue to aggressively pursue perpetrators who expose the American public to the dangers of unapproved stem cells and ensure that they are punished to the full extent of the law."



**" We all get heavier as we get older because, there's a lot more information in our heads."**



**So I'm not fat, I'm just really intelligent and my head couldn't hold anymore so it started filling up the rest of me!**

## **Pajamas Don't Matter Do They – Update**

Thanks to all those who took the time to let us know about the clothing options for people with disabilities.

The following maybe helpful if this is something you struggle with:

**[www.clothingsolutions.co.nz](http://www.clothingsolutions.co.nz)**

Deborah Leath the founding director of Clothing Solutions has an extensive nursing background. She had worked for many years as an enrolled nurse in both Canterbury and Auckland before

graduating as a Registered Nurse. She subsequently returned to Canterbury and worked in various positions before taking up a management role in a dementia care rest home facility in Christchurch. In 2002, Deborah and her husband Morgan established Quick Solutions Ltd to

provide nursing care services throughout public and private hospitals, rest homes, community and homecare facilities for both the elderly and disability sectors.

“It was through these combined interventions, we realised a need to provide appropriately tailored garments to meet the individual needs of the elderly or physically challenged. Through an additional background in the apparel industry, our desire to fuse fashion with dignity lead us on the challenging path to create innovative design concepts into our garment specifications. Through extensive product research & development and accepting nothing but perfection in functionality, comfort and style we successfully created a range of garments that exceeded the expectations of our



clients, their families and care providers. An emphasis has also been placed onto the age appropriateness of our garment designs ensuring our younger clients are dressed in alliance with their peers. The benefits in our garments key design features are numerous. Our garments also improve incumbent safety issues to both the patients and caregivers alike. They reduce the risk of patient skin tears whilst dressing and can reduce the risk of injury to caregivers whilst dressing physically challenged patients. The outcome also delivers improvement in

dressing time and toileting efficiencies.

We have also uniquely provided the opportunity for individual clients to incorporate their own fabric choices into specific areas of the garment personalising their individuality

and providing a sense of independence in clothing choice.

Our garments are exceptional in areas of care such as disabilities, special needs, intellectual handicapped (IHC), cerebrovascular accident (CVA), hemiplegia, stroke, hospice, palliative care, arthritis, multiple sclerosis (MS), spinal injury, paraplegic, quadriplegic and tetraplegic, amputees, hospital care, rest home care, independent and assisted living. They not only provide added style and dignity to the client, the garment design also encourages independence in many cases. Our garment range includes men's shirts, ladies shirt frocks, ladies night dresses, men's night shirts and bodysuits.



For the clients requiring assisted living, our garments provide a superior level of ease, comfort and safety in patient management."

### **Deborah Leath**

*Another response gave us this contact:*

**[www.davidlindsay.co.nz](http://www.davidlindsay.co.nz)**

David Lindsay Clothing – restricted movement clothing collection!

"David Lindsay was established in New Zealand in June 2005 by Sally Aydon. A 25 year background in nursing coupled with a passion for design gave her a vision of developing designs for those specifically with restricted movement. At David Lindsay we understand that everyone is different. Different shapes, different sizes and different abilities.

The David Lindsay restricted movement clothing collection, has been designed with just that in mind. Our patented clothing collection includes daywear, nightwear and underwear for both men & women with restricted movement and is also available in standard fitting. Our quality fabrics are all tested for suitability to commercial washers and driers, and have been tried and tested extensively."

Designed by a nurse-turned clothing designer, this range of clothing is great for people with any disability, being both fashionable and functional. Sally Aydon, based in Mana, Wellington, has demonstrated the range to several MS support groups and was well-received. Sally is happy to post items out for trial, and is very accommodating.



### **Van Update**

We are thrilled that we have approx \$10,000 left to raise to complete the van fitout and to finally get it on the road. A funding application has been placed and we are hopeful of a positive outcome from this in the next couple of weeks. The planned fit out will take about 4 weeks and we will soon also be advertising for volunteer drivers who will need to complete some training before being able to pick up and deliver our people. Hopefully you will see the van on the road in early April.



## BBC News - Health

### *Rare gene links vitamin D and multiple sclerosis*

A rare genetic variant which causes reduced levels of vitamin D appears to be directly linked to multiple sclerosis, says an Oxford University study.

UK and Canadian scientists identified the mutated gene in 35 parents of a child with MS and, in each case, the child inherited it.

Researchers say this adds weight to suggestions of a link between vitamin D deficiency and MS.

The study is in *Annals of Neurology*.

Multiple Sclerosis is an inflammatory disease of the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord).

Although the cause of MS is not yet conclusively known, both genetic and environmental factors and their interactions are known to be important.

Oxford University researchers, along with Canadian colleagues at the University of Ottawa, University of British Columbia and McGill University, set out to look for rare genetic changes that could explain strong clustering of MS cases in some families in an existing Canadian study.

They sequenced all the gene-coding regions in the genomes of 43 individuals selected from families with four or more members with MS.

The team compared the DNA changes they found against existing databases, and identified a change in the gene CYP27B1 as being important.

When people inherit two copies of this gene they develop a genetic form of rickets - a disease caused by vitamin D deficiency.

Just one copy of the mutated CYP27B1 gene affects a key enzyme which leads people with it to have lower levels of

vitamin D.

The researchers then looked for the rare gene variant in over 3,000 families of unaffected parents with a child with MS.

They found 35 parents who carried one copy of this variant along with one normal copy.

In every one of these 35 cases, the child with MS had inherited the mutated version of the gene.

The likelihood of this gene's transmission being unconnected to the MS is billions to one against, say the researchers.

Prof George Ebers, lead study author at Oxford University, says the odds are overwhelming.

"All 35 children inheriting the variant is like flipping a coin 35 times and getting 35 heads, entailing odds of 32 billion to one against."

He added: "This type of finding has not been seen in any complex disease. The uniform transmission of a variant to offspring with MS is without precedent but there will have been interaction with other factors."

Prof Ebers believes that this new evidence adds to previous observational studies which have suggested that sunshine levels around the globe - the body needs sunshine to generate vitamin D - are linked to MS.

He maintained that there was now enough evidence to carry out large-scale studies of vitamin D supplements for preventing Multiple Sclerosis.

"It would be important particularly in countries like Scotland and the rest of the UK where sunshine levels are low for large parts of the year. Scotland has the greatest incidence of Multiple Sclerosis of any country in the world."

Dr Doug Brown, head of biomedical research at the MS Society, called it an important development.

"This shines more light on the potential role of vitamin D deficiency on increasing the risk of developing MS.

"This research is gathering momentum and will be the subject of discussion at an international expert meeting in the USA this month, the outcomes of which will shape future research that will give us the answers we so desperately need about the potential risks and benefit of vitamin D supplementation."

Paul Comer, from the charity MS Trust, said the research strengthened the case for vitamin D being one potential contributory cause of MS.

"Current opinion suggests that a combination of genetic predisposition, environmental factors such as exposure to sunlight and possibly some sort of trigger, such as a viral infection, interact in some way to start the development of MS.

"We welcome any research that clarifies the interplay between these factors. This is another step towards finding ways to reduce the risk of developing MS, but it is likely to be some years yet before we can gauge the significance of vitamin D deficiency to MS."



***To come home from the Casino with a small fortune, go to the Casino with a large one.***



**"Medical care certainly ain't what it used to be!"**

## **Bequests**

In our last newsletter was an article on bequests. This important way to support the work of the Society has previously been largely unrecognised and supported but since the publication of the last newsletter we have been made aware of at least two people who (anonymously) have made arrangements for a bequest to the Society upon their deaths. We don't know who these people are but we want to express our deepest gratitude to them for their generosity and forethought and to encourage others to consider this method of leaving a lasting legacy. Contact the office if you require further information.

Subscriptions for 2012 are now due and a subscription form is enclosed. It is with deep respect that we ask you to complete it and return with your payment as soon as possible.

TV are also in the bedroom for early nights or late mornings. An opening door leads to the private backyard so that you can open it up on a sunny morning and - anguish in bed in the sun and read the paper.

The views are extraordinary and if I can suggest you take one thing with you when you go to stay in this amazing house - take a pair of binoculars, as the house is at the end of the airport runway sometimes you may get big jets flying very low over the house as they take off. I am sure with a pair of binoculars you could see exactly who the pilot is and what he is doing!!!

There has been so much thought go into developing the house - right down to the carpet which is low pile to allow easy movement for walkers and wheelchairs.

Extras available in the house include:

Lounge chair - electric and helps you up to standing

Hospital bed - electric

Bed hoist

Wheelchair

Wheelchair commode

Walking frame

A new additional tar sealed driveway has been recently added on a less gradual slope which allows for easier mobility if leaving the house for a stroll.

This beautiful home allowed us to have a holiday in warmth and comfort with everything we could possibly need for minimal cost. I offer my congratulations to the Southland MS Society for developing such a wonderful asset.

I hope that you and your family find an opportunity this year to investigate all the house has to offer you! I am sure you will have a wonderful holiday.

Liz Carroll-Lowe

For bookings or enquiries phone Mary Burn, Southland MS Society phone:

03 218 3975

Bookings are best made about 6 months in advance. Traditional holiday periods are often booked early and priority is given to Southland members at these times.



*Display at "Show Your Ability Expo" at the Edgar Sports Centre, 21st Feb*

### **Highway code issued for mobility scooters** *(The Telegraph 2008)*

Mobility scooters, capable of hitting speeds up 8mph, are being kept in check by a new highway code, warning users of the dangers of speeding and drink driving.

The booklet, which features cartoon characters in various scenarios, such as one man who has got his scarf caught under his wheel, and a granny caught up in traffic.

The guidelines helpfully advise users: "Do not use your scooter if you have been drinking alcohol or taking drugs".

It warns users: "Make sure that you know what all the switches and levers on your scooter do, and that you can control it properly before you go out on it."

It points out the potential pitfalls scooter users face, telling them to plan their journey accordingly and make sure they have enough battery power as "steep hills, high kerbs or other obstructions may make it impossible to tackle certain routes".





STREET VIEW



KITCHEN



SPARE



BATHROOM



WET FLOOR



BEDROOM 3



MASTER BEDROOM



BEDROOM 2



VIEW FROM THE HOUSE



MASTER BEDROOM



LOUNGE



LOUNGE



CONSERVATORY



EXTRAS



NEW DRIVEWAY



LAUNDRY



BACK YARD



KITCHEN

# MARCH 2012

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| Mon                    | Tue            | Wed                | Thu             | Fri | Sat                       | Sun |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
|                        |                |                    | 1               | 2   | 3                         | 4   |
| 5 SOCIAL GROUP         | 6 GAMES GROUP  | 7 GYMS GROUP 7PM   | 8               | 9   | 10 BUNNINGS BBQ/BRAIN DAY | 11  |
| 12 AGM/STH OTAGO VISIT | 13 GAMES GROUP | 14 MOSGIEL GROUP   | 15 MENS GROUP   | 16  | 17                        | 18  |
| 19 SOCIAL GROUP        | 20 GAMES GROUP | 21 CLUTHA EXPO     | 22 OAMARU GROUP | 23  | 24 MITRE 10 MEGA BBQ      | 25  |
| 26 OFFICE CLOSED       | 27 GAMES GROUP | 28 FAMILY TIES 7PM | 29              | 30  | 31                        |     |

# APRIL 2012

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| Mon             | Tue            | Wed                   | Thu              | Fri              | Sat | Sun |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|-----|-----|
|                 |                |                       |                  |                  |     | 1   |
| 2 SOCIAL GROUP  | 3 GAMES GROUP  | 4 MOSGIEL/ GYMS GROUP | 5                | 6 OFFICE CLOSED  | 7   | 8   |
| 9 OFFICE CLOSED | 10 GAMES GROUP | 11 CENTRAL OTAGO      | 12 CENTRAL OTAGO | 13 CENTRAL OTAGO | 14  | 15  |
| 16 SOCIAL GROUP | 17 GAMES GROUP | 18                    | 19 MENS GROUP    | 20               | 21  | 22  |
| 23              | 24 GAMES GROUP | 25 OFFICE CLOSED      | 26               | 27 OAMARU GROUP  | 28  | 29  |
| 30              |                |                       |                  |                  |     |     |