



Convergence Newsletter

July 2023

Welcome to the July Convergence Newsletter! We discuss the future of Convergence and the turmoil over the last few years. There is the story of a mini Convergence gathering near Akaroa which sounds more like Club Med than Convergence. Then there is a show stopping question to ask yourself.

This weekend, Anna Groves is sharing a deeply personal experience in a public performance at the Wellington Fringe Festival and we have chosen to share this with the Convergence community as Anna has asked for support in this endeavour, that is pushing her to explore her own limits.

Then one for the blokes in Christchurch a local Men's group looking for new members to meet on a regular basis.

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Convergence notices and newsletter

Send notices you would like to have included to info@convergence.net.nz

To receive the newsletters ask info@convergence.net.nz for it.

This newsletter comes out roughly 4 times a year. Please send contributions to info@convergence.net.nz. Upcoming deadlines will be announced by email prior to newsletter.

Convergence – Where to from Here?

All year I am connected to the community of Convergence. Nearly every day I check into the Convergence email account to see if there are any new emails needing my attention. Thus, for me, Convergence is an event which is always with me, never far from my thoughts. I love most interactions I have with other convergees and do my best, within my own limitations, to foster a spirit of love and togetherness during the year to help ensure a successful event at each New Year. There are two distinct parts to Convergence - the event itself, and the ongoing organisation during the year. One part does not exist without the other. I think it can be said that the combination of those two parts creates the Community of Convergence. One dictionary definition of 'community' is "*the condition of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common*". A definition of 'convergence' is "*the act of converging and especially moving towards union*".

During the past few years the world, New Zealand and Convergence have had tough times. A variety of events and belief systems have emerged which have threatened to split communities apart. As a member of a group called Convergence I, and others, have attempted to put aside some of my/our beliefs so that I/we can still converge together in a spirit of love and harmony. Some convergees have not been prepared, or able, to do that and have withdrawn from the group. So be it. Many people attempting to be a member of this group 'Convergence' have (whether they knew it or not) had to assess whether they can modify their belief systems so as to include others, who may have some totally different beliefs, into the spirit of love and connectedness, with cooperation, which the events of Convergence have had in the past.

From my own experience of the last event, which took place just over two months ago, and the feedback I've heard from others, I can say that many (about 100) of us succeeded in doing so. For myself I really struggled, at times, within the "ongoing organisation during the year" except that this time it was 3 years, due to 2 events having to be cancelled because of Covid. Although I am not a Trustee of Convergence I was inevitably swept up into the argy bargy ("*a noisy disagreement, often with some fighting*") created by some convergees as they tried to assert their beliefs onto others. I guess we all did that to some degree or other. Fortunately Convergence had 5 Trustees* to fall back on, who ultimately have the power to "*ensure the ongoing future of the Convergence Gathering*". They, probably reluctantly, had to step up and effectively take control. Decisions had to be made from many perspectives, mainly legal; health; safety; practicality etc. Their job(s) was not made easy by many convergees trying to assert their beliefs. The Trustees had a thankless task trying to find a middle road! One Trustee resigned because of the argy bargy directed at them. I, personally was also pushed very close to my 'edge' and was on the point of resigning/giving up. I also know others, who were trying to hold things together, were also near their edge. Fortunately a group of 'organisers' emerged** who came up with some fresh ideas, found some personal energy, and the last event happened and was a great success. Hopefully, each year, new people with passion will emerge to continue this energy forward. You?

One of my favourite authors, M Scott Peck wrote*** "*(A community) is anti totalitarian. It's decisions are reached by consensus. A community is a group of all leaders*". I believe that our community of Convergence has to follow those guidelines if it wishes to be true to its name - Convergence. We each need to contribute our best, without dominating, within the group, for the good of the whole community. This definitely happened during the latest main Convergence event and I hope that during the organisational time from now on, between the main Convergence events, people will contribute lovingly, towards the goal of converging into a space of love and togetherness where our differences do not intrude, do not matter.

I know the space of love and togetherness, I've been there often. I get there at times during every Convergence event, sitting in circles or as I 'seredipidise' my way around the site. What magic that is! And, yes, I know that is MY way, my goal, but it may not be yours. So be it!

A big “thank you” to the Trustees - Gordyn, Jazelle, Gavin, Gail and Jeff for stepping up during these difficult times. A personal “thank you” to Jeff for your help in enabling me to deal with my ‘edge’!

* From the Charities Services web site:- “ Entity Structure. The Convergence Gathering is organised by the participants. The Trustees role is to ensure the ongoing future of the Convergence Gathering.” See also the PURPOSE of the Trust, below.

** Note that this group tried, several times, to recruit new members to step up to help. Many criticised but hardly anyone stepped up. Thank you, to those who did step up, and to those who filled out questionnaires we sent out.

*** M Scott Peck. The Different Drum. P72

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of the trust is to develop and support activities that encourage knowledge, awareness and appreciation of community living, sustainable practices, personal development, spiritual growth, interpersonal relationships, cooperation, vegetarian food, musical and artistic expression. In particular the trust will:

3.1 Create the annual event known as Convergence in New Zealand

3.2 Create a space to deliver educational, cultural and spiritual workshops

3.3 Educate its community in pursuits that enhance the welfare and lives of its members

3.4 Create an environment that encourages self discovery and personal growth, through self enquiry

3.5 Encourage knowledge, awareness and development of musical and artistic talents

3.6 Educate people about benefits of vegetarian food through participation in the preparation, creation and consumption of vegan and vegetarian meals, and

3.7 Provide other support and assistance consistent with this charitable purpose.

River

Contributors

Thank you so much to the many who have contributed their writing this time. The newsletter is never possible without you! Please don't stop. If you have not yet written about your experiences at Convergence, musings or thoughts about Convergence, or an event you're running and feel passionate about, please send it to info@convergence.net.nz. We publish everything we are sent, except for events that have been over before we could get a newsletter finished.



Light and Laughter at Lushington

3-6 February 2023

Imagine if you can spending a long weekend with 20 odd (just under 20 to be exact) Convergees, plus a couple of their friends. Imagine that this weekend was spent by the seaside near Akaroa, at the end of a private road. Add to this picture a luxurious bach boasting three bathrooms, five bedrooms, two kitchens and an enormous deck to spread out on while enjoying a panoramic view of sparkling sun-kissed sea and high parched brown hills.



But wait, there's more. This generous property boasts a boatshed packed with kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, a couple of dinghies and small sailing craft with which to explore the sheltered bay, and for the adventurous, further out into the main harbour. Within the bay wave cut platforms of bizarrely twisted and shaped rocks are begging for an adventurous scramble, while a rising tide gives paddlers access to caves - old lava tubes exposed by the sea, to test the nerves of the bold.

This was the luxurious get-away kindly offered by David over Waitangi weekend. And oh boy, was that cool, cool sea ever so good as the mercury topped 30 degrees every day! After a dip, much talking and observing of jet skis racing each other up and down the harbour, came the food. Whipped up from whatever everybody had contributed to the pantry (not the carefully labelled food set aside for private use, obviously) plates laden with delicious yumminess would appear when it was time to eat. To be washed down with champagne like beverage - this was truly the Good Life.



Just when you thought things couldn't get better a pair of dolphins entered the bay, slowly making their way across. Several people tried to lure them closer by swimming in a dolphin-seductive manner, but the reluctant mammals were perhaps more interested in scaring up a feed from the sea. Not to be outdone by our flippered friends, one of our number hopped on a foil board later and quietly zipped around to the sound of decaying electrons while looking like either a comic book hero or a member of the SAS - or possibly a mash up of both. Whichever, it was most entertaining.



This extended pot-luck ran from the Thursday to the Tuesday for the very keen, while others could manage only a day visit. The good news is that David is thinking about offering another retreat later in the year, so keep your eyes on Convergence postings and hope that he can make it happen.

See you there....

Much love M

When did you choose to Live?

As a follow up to the article in the last newsletter about choosing how to die, I would like to explore when did you choose to live?

We were having dinner with friends recently and I asked them the question “when did you choose to live?” Well that was an easy way to stop a conversation, but it was also a way to deepen the conversation. What followed was interesting with one of the couple having a clear idea of when this decision was made and the other having no idea, but was left to ponder.

As a child I vividly remember a time of being very upset with something that happened. I cannot remember the event itself, however I can vividly remember where I was, the feelings I had and the question that came up, **is it worth living?** The thought then went through my head was to end my life.

I did however have a very clear response to this question, that life was worth living and I chose to be here. Being born into this world does not mean someone has consciously chosen to be here at this time and until the decision is made to live life can be a struggle. It was more than 45 years ago that I made this decision and life has been magical ever since. It has not been a perfect life and it has been full of challenges, but these are challenges I have chosen to face. Because I made this decision it means I am better equipped to face the challenges I encounter and live the life I have chosen to live.

I have asked other friend's this same question, when did you choose to live? One was suicidal at the time and had not yet decided to be here. They had made multiple attempts at taking their own life. I encouraged them to decide consciously to be here and live the current life they are in and to examine their motivations for this. After some time, a decision was made by this person to be here and no more suicide attempts have been made since.

At Convergence I met an interesting woman who worked with young people at risk of suicide. She shared some of her wisdom and there were two key messages I got from this. First if someone chooses to leave this world there is no way we can stop them. The person is resourceful enough to find a way to achieve this if that is their choice. The second I found very intriguing and that was true unconditional love is to allow someone to choose their own path in this world, wherever that may lead. This is not placing expectations on them to be something they are not, but to be supportive of their struggles and challenges they face. If someone close to me chooses to take their own life, I may feel pain and suffering about my loss, but it remains their choice to make.

Convergence is a special place for me where I have explored different personas and different ways of being and found what works for me to live my life. It has allowed me to explore questions around love, life and loss. I know one person who is still here because they wanted to see what Convergence would offer them at the next event. Convergence saved at least one life and possibly many more.

At the end of the day the choice is yours, “when did you choose to live?” and if you have not yet made that choice I encourage you to consciously embrace the current life and all it has to offer.

With all the love and support I can give, I am here for you.

Jeff.

Fade - The Art of Dissociation

10-11 March 2023



8pm - 10th March

1pm & 8pm - 11th March

Thistle Hall, Cuba Street,

Wellington

\$10 / \$20

A Memoir in Movement
by Anna Groves



Kia ora wahine mā,



This email is a vulnerable call for help. It is going out to all (well...many!) of the women I have sat in circles with over the years, either online or face to face.

As some of you know I am staging a show in Wellington this weekend called FADE (click [HERE](#) or the link at the bottom of the page to see me talk about it). It is focused on my lived experience of dissociation. Its purpose is to raise awareness and speak out about something that can be shameful. I have finally broken my silence more publicly about my experience of sexual abuse. I am now calling on my women's circle to have my back and send me some courage. This work is calling on all of

my internal resources (sanity).

Here are some tangible ways you can help me -

1. Donating to (+ sharing) my fundraising campaign. This ends in TWO DAYS! Anything helps + can remain anonymous. I am crowd funding due to not getting the grant I applied for.

<https://boosted.org.nz/projects/fade/>

2. Come along and bring a friend. It is a 40 min visual journey, dance, and film. With a Q & A at the end with me. Tickets are \$10 or \$20.

<https://www.fringe.co.nz/show/fade--the-art-of-dissociation>

3. Send a prayer, a thought or text/email message of encouragement my way.

Deep exhale. Why does it feel so hard to request help??!

To support my love for exchange/reciprocity I would like to offer you a night in our sanctuary - just mention FADEX and I will know.

I am grateful to those of you who have already taken action and supported me. It means more than an email can express.

I am taking a pause on offering circles/retreats right now. Time to turn inwards and heal a bit.

Much care out there,
Anna

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmJY7JdPa18&authuser=0>

✦ ✦ ✦

Men's Group In Christchurch

Ongoing throughout 2023

We are looking for men keen to join a Mens Group in Christchurch. We are a group of mature men from a variety of backgrounds meeting fortnightly Tuesdays from 7 to 9 pm in Christchurch. The aim is to create a sharing community valuing self responsibility, mutual connection and support.

If you think this might be you, call Gordyn 021 -0773565 or Nigel 027 - 3412103 to arrange a visit or ask questions.

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