 **NEWSLETTER 107 20 February 2022**

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**Message from Wendy**

Kia ora katoa

We are now in our third year of the Covid pandemic with all that goes with it – masks, distancing, vaccinations and protests.

However, U3A continues undaunted due to the efforts of you, our membership. We have much to be thankful for at this time. We are lucky to be far from the frontline although inevitably Covid is creeping into the community and we are lucky in each other, the stimulation and companionship that U3A offers. So, while being careful to protect ourselves, continue to enjoy what is on offer through the organisation and give your conveners every support as they strive to keep activities as normal as possible.

All being well we will gather as a full group for the AGM next month to enjoy each other’s company, lunch and an entertaining speaker.

I look forward to seeing you all there.

Kia kaha

Wendy

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| **2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** |

To be held on **Wednesday 2nd March 2022** at 1:00pm at REAP House, Queen St, Masterton

The meeting will be preceded by our speaker at **12 noon** then a light lunch starting at 12:30pm. Lunch provided by the U3A Executive.

**NOTE: Vaccine passes will be required by REAP for entry to the AGM.**

**Speaker: “And it’s goodbye from me"** Funeral celebrant Graeme Burnard talks about making your funeral easy. Graeme is an excellent speaker and will deal with this subject in a not-too-serious manner.

The agenda will include

(1) our Treasurer’s proposal that the 2023 subscription for U3A Wairarapa be set at $15, discounted to $10.   (Moved:  Wendy Woodhouse seconded Paul Mallinson)

(2) Election of Deputy Chair (due to resignation of Judith Maginnity) The election is for one year only as our current election cycle ends at the AGM 2023.

(3) Change to our current rules to cover the situation where we have a resignation of the Chair or Deputy mid-term.

The current rules read as follows:

* The Chair and Deputy Chair shall be elected by members in attendance at an Annual General Meeting for a term of 3 years. Persons holding these positions may be re-elected for a further term in exceptional circumstances.

Amendment to be put to the AGM – a new clause to read:

* ***Should either the Chair or Deputy Chair resign or be unable to carry out their duties during their term, the Executive committee may appoint a replacement to hold office until the next AGM.***

**Group reports**

**U3A Opera Appreciation Group**

We have continued to focus on the operas of the Baroque Period. (1600 - 1750) In January, we watched Handel’s “Semele”, with Cecilia Bartoli singing the title role. Bartoli specialises in Baroque roles, for which her voice is so well-suited, especially when delivering her extended trills.

“Semele” is based on Greek myth, in which mortal Semele is enraptured by Jupiter. Disguised as an eagle, he snatches her up and takes her to his love nest in the sky, where she is divinely happy, until Juno, Jupiter’s wife decides to intervene. Also, when Semele aims for immortality, it all ends badly.

The well-known aria,” Where ere you walk…….” is sung by Jupiter to Semele, as he pledges his love for her. In context, it is moving and very beautiful, and one of the highlights of the opera.

Our February session will be Monteverdi’s “L’ Orfeo” based on the myth of Orpheus and Euridice. It was first performed in Mantua, in 1607. This is thought be the earliest form of opera, and so Monteverdi became known as “the father of opera”

We continue to meet in 3 private homes. The full membership is 15, with monthly attendance of 8 -9 regulars. We have welcomed one new member this year.

**Barbara Lovatt, Convenor.**

**Scrabble**

We recommenced on Friday the 21st of Januaryat our usual venue.

Our two non members had been advised by me that they must become financial by the next meeting if they wanted to continue. They have both seen to that. We have changed the format to combat slow games and people being distracted with other things. Games are now 1 hour and we manage to get three games in each session. We have room at our venue for 6 more players so would like that mentioned in the next newsletter please. We will continue to meet at 9.30am every second Friday about 6k's south of Martinborough.

**Graeme Burnard, Convenor**

**TED talks:**

We have been fortunate to have 2 meetings already this year. In January our talks included the arts and the London underground design and in February youth violence (Talks from the UK) and then an interview with Alan Duff re his recent book about social issues in NZ. All stimulated a lot of discussion and sharing of experiences of our own. There will be no meeting in March as the hosts are away.

**Margaret Cole, Convenor**

**South Wairarapa Current Affairs Group**

Attendance for the December meeting was very low with many apologies being received. Because of a mix up with the booking of the event room at Roseneath together with only 5 members in attendance, I decided to hold the meeting at my residence. Christmas decorations and morning tea with Christmas eats became the main focus. Despite the low numbers, we still discussed some of the recent current topics.

It was agreed to discuss at our next meeting the idea of members being designated ahead of time to create a short list of topics that could be discussed at the next meeting.

It was also agreed that there would not be a meeting in January due to the time of year.

**Paul Mallinson, Convenor**

**Masterton Book Group.**

Nothing to date for this year. December meeting went very well at the Screening Room.

**Catherine Graydon, Convenor**

**North-South book group**

Our first meeting for the year will be on 28th February at REAP House. The topic is “Holiday Reading” and I certainly have been able to read quite a few books, including titles that have been recommended by Book Group members over the past year. Our Carterton meetings on alternate months have been booked into the Roseneath Hall - thank you for the information that the hall was available to be booked by members of the public from Barbara Lovatt. It is good to have a new venue confirmed for the year. I am sure we are all looking forward to an enjoyable year of reading.

**Jean Travers, Convenor**

**Creative Writing**

The Group met in later January after a break of 2 months. Our meeting at REAP was nearly a full complement and we continued our approach of reading out our short stories/excerpts, or, in one case-the intentions of how to progress a larger work in the coming year. Going forward- we will continue our format, which includes a theme/idea/etc that might trigger the imagination. We await the implications of Omicron and how we might share our works. We will welcome a new member to the Group

**Tim Bannatyne, Convenor**

**Philosophy**

The Group met in early February. This followed consultation with members as to whether, in light of the Omicron looming, to continue or cancel. The response from  membership was very large, with a substantive agreement to continue. Attendance was of its usual good levels, but increased by welcoming a former and a new member. We started with a very interesting discussion on "Culture and Perception. Attendees were required by REAP to provide a vax pass. We will continue with our planned programme, subject to circumstances.

**Tim Bannatyne, Convenor**

**Carterton Book Group.**

 We held our first meeting of the year at the end of January – under the Red traffic light.   We had a great turnout and a wide range of books were reviewed – from huge bestselling tomes, to historical fiction, mystical tales and non-fiction (‘How Democracies Die’ and ‘Reflections on Death’, both of which were much enjoyed).   We have a new member who joined us for our final meeting last year, though I think we may have reduced our number of members by one, through ill health.

**Sue Burns, Convenor**

**Lunch Discussion Group**

It had been a challenging time for us all with some of our usual group not prepared to join the rest of us for a meal. We had a very enjoyable meal and lots of discussions outside in the garden at the Main Street Deli. Hopefully soon we will all feel confident enough to get a full muster.

**Pauline Lamb, Co-convener**

**Current Affairs Masterton**

Lively discussion at our February meeting. All wanted to stop the protest in Wellington.

**Richard Jackson, Convenor**

**Walking group**

Not met yet this year.

**Richard Jackson, Convenor**

**With Love**

With Love have not had their first meeting of the year yet but will be having a guest speaker, Louise Trass, a teacher who wrote a book on her family history during lockdown.

It will be interesting to see what progress group members are making with completing their works when we meet.

**Wendy Woodhouse, Convenor**

**Ukulele Group**

We are now meeting back in Education House 22 Dixon St every Friday from 10am to 11am during term time.

We have sorted our 12 new songs for the term and are busily engaged in getting to know them. A new member has joined us, bringing our number up to 8. She also had a ukulele tucked away in a wardrobe for decades. So if you also have a ukulele tucked away in your wardrobe, bring it out and join us. New members are always welcome.

**Chris Fisher, Convenor**

**French Conversation**

We started the year without the resource of our French teacher. Consequently, we have returned to a French language course we bought a few years ago. The content of the 'Coffee Break French' course is very well suited to our level and we are exploring the grammatical points with more insight now. Perhaps that is a sign of progress! As well as our Friday session at the Education Centre we still meet every Wednesday at the Kainga Cafe in Carterton. This gives us another opportunity to practise talking about our week or other points of interest – perhaps even a trip to France!

**Brett Clark  Convenor**

**Cinema Group**

December-January has been a subdued period for cinema-going members. The continued threat of covid continues to hang over us and it is discomforting to know that even after triple vaxxing we are still vulnerable. Some members report that they are watching films via Netflix and other media. Jane Campion's "The Power of the Dog" can be viewed on Netflix, although the film lends itself to the big Cinema screen. It is rumoured to be a frontrunner for Oscars, as has Kenneth Branagh's "Belfast".

Members are invited to an afternoon gathering from 2.30p.m. Thursday 24th February at 401 Ngaumu Road, RD 10 Masterton, to discuss films they have seen over the past two months.

Now that there are so many ways of seeing films, some of which are not released in theatres, it may be appropriate to change the name of our Cinema Group to "Wairarapa U3A Film Group".

**Mark and Libby Coubrough, Cinema Group co-convenors**

**Italian Language**

The Italian lessons are still taking place every Friday morning at the Education Centre in Masterton.

There are two classes. The beginner class form 9am to 10am and the intermediate class from 11am to 1pm.

This year we have 6 students in the beginner class and 7 students in the intermediate class.

All lessons focus on conversation. Every week each student brings a written or oral report about their week and presents it to the class. The other students then ask questions. The tutor facilitates the conversation, corrects mistakes and explains the relevant grammar topics.

**Lucia Zanmonti Convenor**

**Scam emails or phone calls**

One of our members has alerted us to a phone scam, purportedly from a charity, which tries to extract financial information. This has prompted your committee to suggest that we include this reminder in the newsletter.

Most of you will be well aware that there are a great variety of scam emails or phone calls from fraudsters trying to steal your identity and getting access to your bank account details and I am sure that you all will have experienced the call from Spark or Microsoft saying that your internet is faulty and asking you to open up your computer and follow their instructions. Simply, this will enable them to install a malware programme which will give them access to your files. A telecommunications company would **never**call a customer out of the blue and request remote access to their device/s. If this happens to you, it is a scam, and**the best action you can take is to hang up**.

Another common scam is the unexpected email from a freight forwarding company saying that you have a parcel waiting to be delivered but it needs customs duty of some small amount to be paid….which gives the fraudster your name and details of your bank account.

Every day, land line and mobile phone users are targeted by off-shore based phone scammers calling or texting. The one that annoys me the most is the call which gives a couple of rings on your phone and then stops, appearing as a missed call. These are “Wangiri” calls, typically missed calls from an overseas number but often now from a NZ number. The intention of the scammer is to entice you to call back the number upon seeing a missed call. If you were to call back the number, once connected you could be charged at premium toll rates while a message plays to encourage you to stay on the line as long as possible. A variation on the Wangiri scam happens when an operator answers when you return the missed call, purports to be from a trusted organisation (like a charity), and then attempts to collect personal information or payment details.

I never return calls to numbers I don’t know – if it is important, they will contact me in some other way.

In regard to the very common Phishing or Banking frauds, just remember that it would be very unusual for your bank to contact you by email or text, seeking any sort of personal financial information. If there is an issue with your account, the bank will normally write to you.

If you need any more information, look at the Department of Internal Affairs website [www.dia.govt.nz](http://www.dia.govt.nz) , Netsafe [www.netsafe.co.nz](http://www.netsafe.co.nz) or the NZ Telecommunications forum www.tcf.org.nz

If you do inadvertently disclose any financial and bank account details to someone you don’t know, contact your bank as soon as possible. They have dedicated staff to handle this type of situation.

**And just to finish up**

Your editor is one of those people who have difficulty managing surgical masks, glasses and hearing aids. I just have to keep telling myself that “Psychology Today “ magazine confirms that people who wear glasses look more honest, more trustworthy and because it looks like we read more, we appear more intelligent. What the article didn’t say that we also have a tendency to swear a lot as the hearing aids go flying when they get tangled up with the mask cord. Yet another trial of the covid era!

All the best – and see you at the AGM (note your diary now)

David