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NEWSLETTER 111 14 October 2022

Message from Wendy

Kia ora katoa

Spring is here with a flurry of snow and cherry blossom and the usual unsettled weather we expect at this time of the year. A friend reports that she has made a lamb motel for her thirteen motherless lambs in the garage in a refrigerator box with flooring. They are very warm and happy. As with the lambs I hope you are all keeping warm and away from the remaining winter bugs.

Conveners have noticed a slight decline in group numbers no doubt due to the uncertainty we have experienced over the last few years. This will no doubt be resolved as we come out of hibernation.

It was very disappointing to have to cancel the Gathering last month and frustrating for Graeme after all his organisation. Such an interesting speaker too.

Attached to this newsletter is a survey to help us decide whether you still want these to continue. It would be disappointing to have to cancel them especially as Jan V instigated them in response to demand and because it is the only opportunity we have to meet U3A members from different groups.

Perhaps the coming warmer days will bring us out of our burrows and we can meet again. Sadly too, the Martinborough Scrabble group has also ceased but the enthusiastic core group will continue to meet privately. However, plans are underway for a revival of a Martinborough Current Affairs group so that will keep Martinborough on the U3A map. Best wishes to you all for the coming warmer days.

Nga mihi
Wendy

Exec Meeting

At the recent Exec meeting, we discussed the decision to cancel last month's Gathering because of low numbers, and a decision was made to suspend the Gatherings till after the AGM in March 2023. We also decided to survey our membership to seek your views as to the future of these events and a survey form is attached. To make your views known, there are several options:

- Complete the form and post it to our Secretary Margaret Cole, 72 C Woodside Road RD1 Greytown 5794
- Send an email with your comments to Margaret at bmcole@orcon.net.nz
- Scan the completed form to Margaret at her email address
- Make your views known to the Convener of the Group you attend, who will then pass your comments on to the Exec.

Choose whatever option is easier for you – but we do want to know what you think.

Group reports

U3A Opera Appreciation Group

The group continues to meet in private homes, which is a popular choice. However, as a result, the membership is currently at capacity . Prospective new members are welcome to come on a waiting list.

Prior to each session, I compile and email out “homework” which gives a background to the opera, synopsis, and information about the singers. This is to enhance the enjoyment of the chosen opera, and such “homework” is generally much appreciated.

Opera DVDs continue to be sourced from the late Ngaire Chamlet’s extensive collection, but are also now more frequently sourced from You-Tube. This latter source also requires access to a smart TV, which is another reason for meeting in private homes.

As well as the group’s sessions, some members have also been attending the “Live at The Met” 2021-22 series of operas from the New York Metropolitan Opera House, which have been shown at The Screening Room, Kurapuni. Thus we can experience the latest and greatest talent, in one of the world’s most significant opera houses.

Barbara Lovatt Convener

Scrabble

We continue to meet every second Friday and alternate between two members' homes. One a few k's south of Martinborough and one in the township.

We have not had any interest from anyone else to join us and the 4 of us are quite to play amongst ourselves. We are planning an end of year lunch and prize giving for the player of the year.

Graeme Burnard, Convener

TED talks:

We have had very interesting talks recently – Animal intelligence in August and How judges are appointed and lawyers defending the guilty or perceived guilty in September. We have had 2 people leave our group due to other commitments so have been able to accept one new member.

Margaret Cole, Convener .

South Wairarapa Current Affairs Group

The group met on August 18th and September 15th. Attendance has dropped off lately to just 6 in August and 5 in September. We lost a member with a resignation in August. Our meetings are now publicised in the Events section of the Mid-Week newspaper.

Despite the low numbers, discussion has continued to be vigorous. In August, Margaret led off a talk about issues around free speech which moved on to the problems both major parties were having with their MPs. In September, we departed from the usual format and watched a documentary entitled Capital in the 21st Century which included discussion and ideas from the French economist Thomas Picketty. Plenty of discussion ensued. Many thanks to Margaret and Bruce Cole for hosting this in their home.

We will investigate whether we might hold our October 20th meeting in Martinborough since there appears to be some interest down there.

Paul Mallinson, Convenor

Masterton Book Group.

The monthly meetings of the **Masterton book group** at Reap on the second Tuesday of the month, continue to be well attended by members.

August topic was personal reading with 2 members both enjoying “Diamond Eye” by Kate Quinn based on a real life Russian woman sharpshooter in WW2. Hilary Mantel and Jane Harper were also among the many authors read.

September’s topic was an Irish author. John Boyne “Echo Chamber,” “Centaur” by Declan Murphy, “The Murder Box” by Olivia Kernan, and 2 books by Tania French “The Witch Elm” and “The Searcher” were among the many reviews.

October topic is personal choice which for me means I can tackle the pile of Library books on my bookcase.

Catherine Graydon, Convenor

North-South Book Group

Our membership remains steady at 13. The topic in August was “A novel with a food in the title”. I found quite hard to find a book and reviews from other members were variable.

However, the topic for September was “A book you would reread or frequently dip into” which gave rise to a wide variety of books many with 10/10 ratings. Some of these were: Winnie the Pooh by AA Milne 1927. “My parents and my uncle, then my brother and I used to complete each other’s recitations”. (Doesn’t everyone?)

A Braided River of Faith edited by Nan Burgess 2002. 100 inspirational stories depicting the life and faith of many ordinary Presbyterian women.

Noord-Brabant in Grootvaders Tijd by Jan Naaijken 1978. Memories of childhood and a connection to family history.

The Single Ladies of Jacaranda Retirement Village by Joanne Nell. A book that has been read and reread, with out-loud laughter and recognition of events in later life.

The Meaning of Trees by Robert Vennell. New Zealand flora, their history, taxonomy, etymology and uses – medicinal, culinary and other uses. A book to be frequently dipped in to.

Pyjama Girls of Lambert Square by Sara Donanti 2012. He’s claustrophobic. She’s agoraphobic. He doesn’t own a pair of pyjamas. That’s all she wears.

Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes 1969. SciFi. An emotional wringer – you have a lump in your throat in many places and a cry at the end.

Jean Travers, Convenor

Philosophy

Interest in the philosophy Group has continued. We have had a very varied and interesting programme over the year with members providing notes on topics for discussion. By way of example, in the last two months had topics such as "A scientific basis for personhood" (Robert Miller); and "Handel's Oratorios and 18th Cent thought" (Margaret McLean-Craig). A full programme is pencilled in for the rest of the year.

Tim Bannatyne, Convenor

Creative Writing

I previously reported that although listed members of the Group were reasonably static, attendee numbers had reduced in recent times. The individual reasons are varied. This trend has continued. The enjoyment of the Group has not diminished with the usual challenges for those so inclined- for instance, last month our 'trigger' was to write an excerpt/chapter from fictional memoirs. We will see how the numbers hold over the rest of the year.

Tim Bannatyne, Convenor

Current Affairs Masterton

Our Current events group continues to meet at REAP House on the second Monday of the month (next meeting Monday 10 October). Over the 3 months of July – September, our group has consistently had 6 -7 people attending – a big thank you to our regulars!

Our September meeting included a discussion of the Ukraine War – one member referred to the Minsk Agreements of 2014 – 2015, so that is a matter for further research. However, our discussions do flow over other topics, as we comment on domestic and Pacific current events also.

Our September meeting concluded with an invitation, by the South Wairarapa group, to view a film about the French economist Thomas Picketty, who has won international recognition for his work on the destructive effects of rising wealth inequality.

Richard Jackson, Convenor

Ukulele Group

We continue to meet every Friday during term time from 10 – 11am at Education House.

One of our members moved to Wanganui but we have acquired a new member, so our number remain at 8. We are attempting more difficult chords and complicated songs.

Our highlight in August was getting together with South End Strummers and making music together at Club Masterton before being served a tasty lunch. Hopefully with Covid restrictions easing we will be able to perform again at Carter Court in December.

Chris Fisher, Convenor

Wairarapa U3A Film Group

On Thursday 29th September, 10 members met at Wild Oats Café, Carterton. The upstairs room there is conducive to good discussion. Four members had earlier tendered their apologies due to other commitments. So those present agreed that our next meeting will be at an alternative time and venue (Curry Twist, at noon) on Thursday, 27th October. Films reviewed were:

You Will Die at 20

A Sudanese youth has a burden growing up in the knowledge that a holy man predicted he will die at 20. Members who saw this film at Sunset Cinema gave it 9/10 and 10/10. The film, directed by Amjad Abu Alala, was in Sudanese Arabic with good subtitling.

Lancaster

Two members who saw this documentary involving veteran crew members of the WWII bombers, recommended this film as a poignant and detailed portrayal of the airmen's part in the war.

A Stitch in Time

A former dressmaker reinvents herself after meeting a young Chinese fashion designer. This Australian film was summarised as a good enough movie to see on a wet day: would that be 6 or 7 out of ten?

Utu and Muru

These two films were peripheral to an interesting discussion as to how much they could be regarded as an accurate portrayal of historical events, and whether the real point of the movie Muru was to present the shock of the armed police raids in the eyes of the Tuhoe people affected.

Mark and Libby Coubrough, Film Group co-convenors

With Love

The "With Love" group continues to add to their life stories for their grandchildren. Last month a topical theme was "Memories and experiences relating to Queen Elizabeth 11"

Wendy Woodhouse, Convenor

Editor's comment: some of you will remember the items in the photo below. The middle medal was given to all school children in New Zealand in 1953 to commemorate the Queen's Coronation. The medal with the blue ribbon was similarly given to children at the time of the 1953-54 Royal Visit. I'm not sure how I acquired the badge on the left – U3A members may remember whether these were also handed out to children at the time of the Queen's coronation.



Finally

There are some members who have not claimed a refund arising from the cancellation of the September gathering. If this includes you, please contact Tony Lane at wandmlane@xtra.co.nz so he can repay you.

Gathering Survey attached.

U3A Gathering Survey

Our organisation consists of many members meeting in a number of different groups. The purpose of 'The Gathering' is to create a periodic opportunity for all members to meet and mix outside of their specific group but within a context of interesting, engaging speakers, under our common banner of U3A. Since the Covid lockdowns, we have aimed to hold 'The Gathering' once every two or three months. However, since the last Gathering had to be cancelled due to low numbers registering - and also generally declining numbers for these meetings, we are keen to get **YOUR** feedback regarding all Gatherings.

Should these continue? Yes/ No / Don't know

Please comment on the following:

Format of Gathering

Subjects for speakers (if you favour speaker) – and any suggestions

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Frequency

Day of week and Time

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Venue -

Meal provided and price (at the present cost of \$12, with increasing costs, U3A still subsidises the meal) – if you favour a meal/ snack.

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Comments:

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We do send out reminders before each Gathering, because for organisational/ catering purposes we must have your positive responses on time

Many thanks for taking the time to tell us what you think

Wendy Woodhouse, Chair, U3A Wairarapa