U3A Meadowbank

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NEWSLETTER – APRIL / PAENGA-WHĀWHĀ 2024

Greetings from the President

Tena Koutou, Tena Koutou, Tena Koutou Katoa Another informative U3A Meadowbank meeting was held in March which was appreciated by all present. Mini speakers included:

Peter Allen Convenor of the "Science and Technology' group gave an interesting outline of the topics presented including people, inventions, discoveries and any other interesting matters. I heard members discuss at morning tea how surprised they were at the variety of topics included such as 'volcanoes' and 'AI'(8 Vacancies.)

Margaret Davidson and Rosemary Laing representing a 'Shared reading' group gave examples of how the group functions. They outlined the range of NZ and International books and poems read aloud by the group, and the questions asked during the readings, such as "What do we think is happening here?' 'What does this remind us of in our own lives?' Rosemary gave an example of a reading (No current vacancies)

Karen Cleary, Convenor of the 'Ramblers' walking group spoke of examples of the 1-1/2 hour straight forward walks on formed paths, in parks and towns. Their aim is to keep fit, be social and share fellowship whilst walking together. Each week, in all weathers, the group walks mainly around our area. Followed by a visit to a cafe and a chat (7 vacancies)

If you need data about our 29 groups, please look at the red folder by the notice board available at our Monday meetings where profiles of each group are found including details of times and contacts. Details are also on our website www.u3ameadowbank.nz.

Main Speakers:

Following morning tea our Main speakers were Matthew Hand assisted by David Goodwin outlining the Purewa Heritage project, Purewa tours, and verifying and correcting burial records. Matthew outlined the history of the space, facilities, videos of famous personnel buried or cremated at Purewa, the beautiful trees and flowers, proposed new builds, and the vast amount of data available on the Purewa website.

As a Genealogist I was most interested in this presentation especially as I also have several family members buried at Purewa (with a plot reserved for my ashes!) The Committee met after the meeting discussing reports from members of the committee, our website, database, review of our handbook, and how to encourage some of our 237 members to join the committee and share responsibilities. We look forward to seeing you all at our next meeting on April 15th.

Gay Williams (Acting President)

March speakers: Matthew Hand & David Goodwin

Mini speaker: Karen Cleary (Ramblers)

Who's Who for Monday 15th April 2024 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: Time Poor Walkers

Mini speakers: New Zealand History. The do's and don'ts of Op Shop donations – Terry Lord, Jill Ensor, Margaret Davidson.

Guest speaker: Bernardette Stockman, Education Manager, Relief Aid New Zealand. Bernardette will talk about a programme called 'BounceBack4Syria', a programme for internally displaced children in Syria. This voluntary project was started by Bernadette with the help of a team on the ground, based in north western Syria. By providing games and activities they are raising the levels of resilience in the children who have been impacted by 12 years of war and now repeated earthquakes. The project is connected with Relief Aid, a New Zealand founded humanitarian organisation operating in Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Who's Who for Monday 20th May 2024 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: Poetry

Mini Speaker: Katrina Burgess: Conflict between Ukraine and Russia

Guest speaker: Jon Varndell, Group Director – Civil Infrastructure New Zealand at AECOM. 'Auckland City Rail Link – an update.'

With a career spanning over 3 decades, Jon specialises in the strategic leadership and management of multidisciplinary transportation projects and is "passionate about working collaboratively with clients and project teams to build a high-performing culture that everyone values and enjoys being part of".

He spoke to us in 2012 about the construction of the Newmarket Viaduct. He will talk to us in May on the City Rail Link project.

Interest Group News

A second Shared Reading group has been suggested for 2024

The original group has been running very successfully for over 18 months and is fully subscribed with a waiting list.

So, what exactly is Shared Reading? Basically, it's about making human connections by reading literature together, and through this process, facing the complexities of human experience.

The leader selects a short story and a poem that is linked thematically. The group reads it together, aloud, line by line, pausing to discuss the story along the way.

Several people have expressed interest and at this stage it looks as if afternoon sessions would be a preference.

A preliminary meeting is going to be held at my place, 1/7 The Parade, St Heliers at 1.30 pm on Wednesday April 17. Please let me know if you are coming.

We would welcome a few more members so, if you are interested, please contact me **(Jocelyn Goodman)** at jgoodman4647@gmail.com or **Margaret Davidson, Groups Co-ordinator**.

U3A Meadowbank Membership News for 2024 to 25 March.

Greetings everyone. An exciting and a very pleasing result to report. We have had 15 new members fully, and swiftly, enrolled since 1 October 2023 at the beginning of this financial year. The names of this proactive group follow: SYLVIA BENNETT, LESLEY ELIA, MAXINE GREEN, JUDI HIGGINSON, CHRISTINE HOLLAND, VERONICA KRUKZIENER, CHRISTINE LEE, CHRIS LORD, CHRISTINE MARSHALL, JANET SAY, BEVERLEY STAFFORD, JANET TAYLOR, NEIL TAYLOR, ALLAN VERNON and EVELYN WINTHROP

A number of these folk have already been welcomed but this is to restate our welcome and to reassure you that any questions about procedures or activities may be directed to myself or to any pertinent committee member. A revised contact list for all the committee is attached with this April Newsletter mailing.

Sadly, this month we farewell Trish Janes, a longstanding member since 2002 and recently very involved with our Saints and Sinners group. Trish died following an accident in January and the consequences thereof. We send our sincere sympathy to Keith and family. We hope to see you back with us when you are ready Keith.

We still have space to enrol new members, and to welcome your visitors to the general meetings where they can experience our U3A activities and friendliness. Please bring any visitors to the Committee table, just inside the entrance door, for a name badge, and for some encouragement and persuasion! Remember that our website is a very good place to find information, enrolment details and interest group updates. www.u3ameadowbank.nz

Judith Stewart, Membership Coordinator, phone: 021 617 481

Book of the month

'Chip War - the fight for the world's most critical technology' by Chris Miller (2022)

A history of 'integrated circuits' -(with millions or billions of microscopic transistors carved into them) known as 'chips' and the key companies involved.

A fascinating overview from early developments in the 1950s through to the 2020s.

It is scary to know how much we are dependent on the few companies in the world that can design or manufacture these important components the main ones being - TSMC in Taiwan, ASML in the Netherlands, SAMSUNG in South Korea, and INTEL in the USA.

The industry is gargantuan in style and requires globalised supply chains. Funds needed are in the tens of billions, and virtually everything we use need microchips to function- smart phones, refrigerators, cars, and chips are embedded in every device that requires computing power.

I found this book so fascinating especially as I remember my husband making his own electronic chips in the 1960s, and now we have a world with quintillions of transistors and a tiny number of irreplaceable companies.

Gay Williams

Tragic death of Rod Oram - Business and climate commentator

Rod Oram, a journalist for over 40 years and a treasured Newsroom colleague and leading business and climate commentator in NZ public life for decades, has died in Auckland from injuries suffered in a cycling accident.

Rod, aged 73, died on Tuesday in Auckland Hospital, two days after suffering a cardiac arrest and crashing off his bike at Ambury Park in Māngere Bridge.

He reported from three big global COP climate summits for Newsroom and was planning to attend the next, in Azerbaijan, in November.

Rod was an Edmund Hillary Fellow, a "community of 500-plus innovators, entrepreneurs and investors committed to New Zealand as a basecamp for global impact".

Rod spoke to our U3A Money matters group, and his wife Lynn spoke to our Meadowbank U3A

He will be sorely missed

Whakataukī / Words of Wisdom

Time to enrich our days with some more words of wisdom from around the world!

"If I had to live my life all over again, I'd do it exactly the same – only I wouldn't read Beowulf."

Woody Allen

"We are here on Earth to help others. What on earth the others are here for I do not know."

WH Auden

"The secret of life is honesty and fair dealing. If you can fake that, you've got it made."

Groucho Marx

Next Monthly Meeting: Monday 15th April 2024 at 10 am at St Chad's.

Don't forget to send us your U3A news to include in the next newsletter – we rely on your contributions

Deadline for MAY 2024 newsletter items is FRIDAY 26th APRIL 2024. Expect receipt confirmation

If you change your personal details, OR LEARN OF THE BEREAVEMENT OF A U3A MEMBER, please email the change to u3ameadmemb@gmail.com. Please include YOUR full name, physical address, phone number and email address.

TO CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS please use the correct gmail addresses below:

Secretary: u3ameadowbank@gmail.com

Membership Coordinator: u3ameadmemb@gmail.com

Treasurer: u3ameadtrea@gmail.com

Newsletter Coordinator: u3ameadnews@gmail.com

Feedback: u3ameadfeedback@gmail.com

Groups Coordinator: u3ameadconv@gmail.com

President: u3ameadpres@gmail.com

Something Amusing

Biblical Explanation of Life Cycles...

On the first day, God created the dog and said: "Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. For this I will give you a life span of twenty years."

The dog said, "That's a long time to be barking. How about only ten years and I'll give you back the other ten?

And God said that it was good.

On the second day, God created the monkey and said, "Entertain people, do tricks, and make them laugh. For this, I'll give you a twenty-year life span."

The monkey said, "Monkey tricks for twenty years? That's a pretty long time to perform. How about I give you back ten like the dog did?"

And God again said that it was good.

On the third day, God created the cow and said, "You must go into the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer's family. For this, I will give you a life span of sixty years."

The cow said "That's kind of hard to want me to live for sixty years.
How about twenty and I'll give back the other forty?"

And God agreed it was good.

On the fourth day, God created humans and said, "Eat, sleep, play, marry and enjoy your life. For this, I'll give you twenty years."

But the human said, "Only twenty years? Could you possibly give me twenty, the forty the cow gave back, the ten the monkey gave back, and the ten the dog gave back; that makes eighty, okay?"

"Okay," said God, "You asked for it."

So that is why for our first twenty years, we eat, sleep, play and enjoy ourselves. For the next forty years, we slave in the sun to support our family. For the next ten years, we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren. And for the last ten years, we sit on the front porch and bark at everyone.

Life has now been explained to you. There is no need to thank me for this valuable information. I'm doing it as a public service. If you are looking for me. I will be on the front porch.

Something Interesting

Tree swallows having it out.

Researchers have discovered that birds can “divorce” because of affairs or lengthy spells apart, just like humans. Some 90% of the winged creatures are “monogamous” – meaning they have a single mate for at least one breeding season – but studies have found that male promiscuity and long-distance migrations can cause them to break this pattern and find a new partner. “Divorces” are particularly common among plovers, swallows and martins, which are apparently the most licentious species.

The world’s weirdest restaurant

It’s easy to see why Alchemist in Copenhagen has been dubbed “the weirdest restaurant in the world”, says **Charlotte Lytton** in **The Times**. Visits can last up to seven hours and include 50 courses – or “impressions”, as they’re called. It’s not so much a meal, says chef Rasmus Munk, as a challenge to guests, and an attempt to “create a new understanding of the world order”. Dishes include a “freeze-dried butterfly” and a lamb’s brain served in an ultra-realistic mock human head with real eyebrows. Each dish seems to have been conceived to “push a particular button”, and is accompanied by a statement. “Lifeline”, a “surprisingly tasty” ice cream made of pig’s blood, comes with a QR code to sign up as a blood donor; a plaice dish is shrouded in edible plastic to highlight the detritus in our seas.

Most of the meal is served under a planetarium-style dome, on to which films are projected. A dish called “1984” is modelled on the chef’s own eyeball, made from caviar-topped lobster tartare, and eaten under projections of CCTV cameras; a caged chicken claw is served with cooped up hens overhead, to “raise awareness of battery farming”. Whether this commentary ends up being thought-provoking or pretentious depends on the diner. One dish has a thin slice of rabbit meat draped over a silver ribcage. It’s something to do with world hunger – a questionable move when the food here costs about £560 per head. As a grand finale, guests are taken to a small room full of soft white balls and told to dive in while George Michael’s *Freedom* plays. For many, Alchemist is “the kind of experience you’d pay not to be put through” – there have been multiple walkouts and tears. But with 40,000 people on the waiting list, plenty are willing to give it a try.