U3A Meadowbank

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President: John Goodman **Secretary Vivianne Child**

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NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY / HUI-TANGURU 2025

Greetings from the President

Our January meeting was a quiet one, with an excellent talk enjoyed by a mere 77 members. The rest of you missed a treat, although I hope you were all enjoying time at the beach or the mountains or the lakes, with family or peacefully alone, tramping or reading, good or bad books.

James Duncan from MOTAT talked about the beginnings and early days of Auckland's electric tram network, which may not sound particularly interesting but turned out to be fascinating, informative and entertaining. We learned that early tram companies were also land development companies, buying land in front of the expanding lines which then could be developed and sold. We marvelled at the speed of construction of the network, a year or so from start to opening of the first network to Newmarket and Ponsonby, then through Parnell and out to Onehunga and Kingsland a few years later. We gasped in shock and horror at the first tram accident.

The good news is that James has two more talks which we will probably get to hear.

More good news is that Vivianne Child has offered to take over the position of secretary. We are very grateful and look forward to a long and happy association with Vivianne. The committee is now nearly complete.

One position which is still vacant is that of treasurer.

The 2025 year is getting underway with many groups having their first meetings for the year. Groups are the heart of U3A and belonging provides opportunities for learning, contributing and making or new or deepening existing friendships. Please think about groups to which you would like to belong, or even consider starting a new group.

Our groups coordinator, Margaret Davidson will be happy to help with any questions.

We are happy to welcome three new members, Jenni Tozer, Elizabeth Clarke and Katrina van Boheemen.

The arrival of 2025 makes me wonder that the 21st century is nearly one quarter through. Who would have thought.

On behalf of the committee, I hope you all have a happy Anniversary day and Waitangi day and a romantic Valentines day. See you at the February meeting.

John Goodman

President

Our February Meeting:

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John, now officially our U3A president, Gay talking about her group Dollars and Sense, and below, the guest speaker, James Duncan, Tramway Project Manager at MOTAT in his historic Tramway's uniform, with Maureen Putt, who introduced him.

Photos sent by Melda Brunette.

Who's Who for Monday 17 FEBRUARY 2025 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: Science & Technology

Mini Speaker: Mid Walkers & Jazz

Guest speaker: Jacky McLaren, Borneo Bags Foundation (10.50 -12.00)

Jacky writes:

Originally from the UK, I was invited to New Zealand to research mechanically harvested tomatoes for Watties in the '70s for a Masters Degree. I broke a few barriers as a female with Dalgety Stock and Station, then, as a solo mother, began my teaching career in Hawkes Bay.

Two decades of teaching in Brunei and trekking across Borneo brought me into direct contact with one of the last semi-nomadic tribes in Asia, the Penan. As palm oil plantations replace the rainforest, the changes they are confronted with are challenging; lack of food, shelter and medicines take their toll.

The charities I helped to establish, the Penan Women Project and Helping Hands Penan, aim to educate and empower the women of the tribe. The women don't smoke or drink, and all funds raised are channelled back into the family. The men have no option but to work for the logging companies that are bulldozing their way of life.

I have learned what is necessary for happiness. Not much.

Who's Who for Monday 17 MARCH 2025 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: Ramblers Group

Mini Speaker: David Thompson, President U3A Auckland Network: U3A – how it began

Guest Speaker: Rob High, Philanthropy Officer of the New Zealand Red Cross

Rob's topic is "The past, present and future of the New Zealand Red Cross".

Bereavement Notice: from Kathryn Minchin, daughter of Sue Minchin

It is with sadness I impart the news of the passing of my mother, Sue Minchin.

Mum really enjoyed being a member of Poetry Club over the years for the poetry and the fellowship of the club's members.

The Memorial Service for Mum will be held at 11AM on Monday, February 10th at St. Philips Church in St. Heliers. Afterwards there will be refreshments at the church hall.

Please let me know if you will be able to attend.

All the best to you and yours,

Kathryn Minchin

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Books of the month:

As many do over the Christmas New Year break I have read a lot of books.
Choosing which ones to suggest this month was not an easy task - however there are two books which have really made an impression primarily because of how topical they are!

My Promised land
The triumph and tragedy of Israel by - Ari Shavit 2016

This book covers the story of the creation and history of Israel. The movement of Jews from Europe in the 1880s, the struggles and wars over time to the modern place many Jews call home.
Significant dates such as 1947 (civil war) , 1967 (six day war), 1973 (Yom Kippur war), 1977 (political upheaval), 1982 (war in Lebanon) 1987 (Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza Strip revolted against Israel's military rule, 1993 (Oslo peace accords signed)
Seven internal revolts.
Settlers rose against political discipline and restraint
Peaceniks rise against historical and geostrategic reality
Liberals rose against all too powerful state
Orientals rose against Occidental domination
Ultra-orthodox rose against secularism
The hedonists rose against the suffocating conformism of Zionist collectivism
Palestinian Israelis rose against Jewish nationalism

I was particularly moved when the author talked of the complexities for the future when you consider modern day Israel is surrounded by 370 million Arab peoples and they have never found a way to co-exist.

The end of reality
How four billionaires are selling out our future: by Jonathan Taplin.-2023

An outline of the actions of Elon Musk, Peter Thiel, Mark Zuckerberg and Marc Andreessen, all clearly anxious to stay in the good books of whichever admin holds power in the USA.
(The distribution of wealth is first and foremost the distribution of power (Piketty)
Four projects they support
*Web3 - a virtual world (the Metaverse) accessed by a virtual reality (VR) helmet
*Support of crypto currency (pump and dump)
*Human travel and colonisation of distant planets
*Transhumanism - developing human enhancement technologies

A really fascinating read

Gay Williams

Whakataukī / Words of Wisdom

The secret to being miserable is having the leisure to bother about whether you are happy or not.
George Bernard Shaw
If you haven't found something strange during the day, it hasn't been much of a day.
J.A. Wheeler, physicist

Something Amusing

Something Interesting

In line with Gay's first book review above: **The latest from Gaza and Israel: RNZ**

Joyous families are being reunited, and Palestinians are making the grim march back to what is left of their homes amid rubble and ruin after 15 months of Israeli bombardment.

This is the first stage of a ceasefire in which Hamas must handover 33 hostages - captured during its assault on Israel on October 7, 2023.

In return Israel must release about 1900 Palestinians.

To the north, there's another ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel which - just this week - was extended.

The deal there requires both the armed group Hezbollah and Israeli soldiers to withdraw.

BBC's Middle East Correspondent Sebastian Usher explains the situation.

This interview is available on RNZ's Saturday Morning Programme 1 February podcast.

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:

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Next Monthly Meeting: Monday 17 February at 10 am at St Chad's

Don't forget to send in your U3A news to include in the next newsletter. We rely on your contributions.

Deadline for the MARCH 2025 newsletter items is THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2025. Expect receipt confirmation.

N.B. The Easter Monday meeting has been changed to MONDAY 28 APRIL