U3A Meadowbank

P.O. Box 87291, Meadowbank, Auckland, 1742. Email: u3ameadowbank@gmail.com

President: John Goodman Secretary Vivianne Child

www.u3ameadowbank.nz

NEWSLETTER – MAY / HARATUA 2025

Greetings from the President

Despite what I wrote last month, April has produced a goodly amount of rain, especially when public holidays were scheduled, 190 mm for the month so far. Quite a turn-around from February's 7 mm. I hope you all had an enjoyable month.

At our April meeting, one week later than usual because of Easter Monday, Jan Throne from Time Poor Walkers explained her group's operations. It sounded quite attractive, to meet for a chat, a walk of a suitable length and then more conversation over coffee in a local café.

Madeline Ball from Digital Seniors was the other mini-speaker. I had hoped that Digital Seniors would specialise in making robotic retirees, in which case I could place an order for 10 or so to bring our numbers up. However, it appears that Digital Seniors is an organisation which trains volunteers to help older people with technology. That could also be very useful, I will try applying for someone to write my monthly piece for the newsletter. I think that would qualify. Although, an android would be even better.

Our main speaker was Emeritus Professor Laurence Melton, now Vice President of Remuera U3A and convenor of the Philosophy group. His topic was "How to feed the world with its growing population and the challenge of climate change". Professor Melton looked at various diets and their climate and land use footprints and nutritional value, and examined different environments and foods which could be produced there. He introduced many alternative sources of food, from unusual plant and animals, to insects, snails, seaweed and laboratory produced food. Now I know what to do with the snails from my garden and the crickets which insist on living indoors, although I do draw the line at cockroaches.

Attendance at 112 was relatively small again. What would bring the missing members from their comfortable couches to our meetings? We would be interested in hearing what we can do to tempt you. As well, the committee would be keen to hear from any member with complaints about or suggestions for improvement for any part of our organisation, groups, meetings, the president etc. Feedback is always welcome.

We are very pleased to announce a Winter Series to be held in July, on Wednesday afternoons: the 9th, 16th and 23rd. Ex-President Gay Williams will give a series of three talks on Artificial Intelligence. Afternoon tea will be served and included in the very attractive ticket price.

Bookings for members will be open from the time you receive this newsletter for two weeks before being opened to the general public. Spaces are limited, so I suggest early booking. Full details are on the official notice in this newsletter.

Our May meeting will be on Monday 19th May. I look forward to seeing you all then. In the meantime, keep well and keep cheerful.

John Goodman

Who's Who for Monday 19 MAY 2025 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for a 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: Literature
Mini Speakers: Modern American Literature and History

Guest Speaker: Peter Lester

Topic: The America's Cup

Who's Who for Monday 16 JUNE 2025 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for a 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: Memoir Writing
Mini Speakers: Jeanette de Heer, U3A Meadowbank with a presentation on her overseas adventures 1961 - 1962

Guest Speaker: Professor Robert Shaw, Professor of Politics at Massey University

Topic: Small stories of colonisation: An uncomfortable settler family history

New Member

We are pleased to announce a new member, Peter Cooper. Please join us in making him very welcome to U3A Meadowbank.

Whakataukī / Words of Wisdom: Friendship

- I always felt that the great high privilege, relief and comfort of friendship was that one had to explain nothing. Katherine Mansfield
- A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out. Walter Winchell
- The truth is, everyone is going to hurt you. You just got to find the ones worth suffering for. Bob Marley
- Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: "What! You too? I thought I was the only one." C.S. Lewis
- *Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind. "Pooh?" he whispered.*
  "Yes, Piglet?"
  "Nothing," said Piglet, taking Pooh's hand. "I just wanted to be sure of you."
  A.A. Milne, Winnie the Pooh

Our April Meeting

Jan Throne, convenor of Time Poor Walkers.

Madelaine Ball from Digital Seniors (more info under Notices}

Maureen Putt, introducing our main speaker, Emeritus Professor Laurence Melton, University of Auckland

John and Maureen with Emeritus Professor Laurence Melton

Book of the month: Gay Williams

Factfulness - ten reasons we're wrong about the world and why things are better than you think (2018) by Hans Rosling with Ola Rosling and Anna Rosling Ronnlund

In today's society 'knowing the facts' is important but can be difficult to assess. At the beginning of the book is the Gapminder test - consisting of 13 questions- the results confirming how many people do not see the world as it really is.
The book 'Factfulness' Is a fascinating and challenging read outlining the many ways we get facts wrong including by

- Getting things out of proportion
- Expecting bad news
- Generalising
- Failing to acknowledge the majority involved
- Being afraid and failing to see things clearly

I found this book most interesting as it outlined the authors fact based world view.
The main author Hans Rosling, was a medical doctor, renowned public educator, an advisor to the WHO, UNICEF, and in 2012 was listed by Time magazine as one of the hundred most influential people in the world.

A really good read

Gay Williams

Notices:

Book Exchange Table at our u3a meetings

Maybe you were given an interesting book for Christmas, and it is now reclining on a shelf, taking up space and collecting dust. And no, even though you think you will, you probably won't read it again in the future. So please, bring it along to our next u3a meeting. I'm sure there would be some other member delighted to read it.

The concept of our Book Exchange Table is that you bring one or two books that you have enjoyed reading and no longer want, and take one or two books, returning them when you have read them….

There is a steady turnover of books, but we would really appreciate some more contemporary writing. And a reminder that heavy hard-cover books, and books with small print no longer have the same appeal!

Please, if you could contribute some good books it would be really appreciated. Also, a reminder to bring back those books that you have borrowed so others can enjoy them as well….

New Interest Group – Introduction to Bridge

Bridge is not as difficult or as intimidating as you think. Our new Introductory Bridge group is intended to make Bridge easy. If you know the difference between two and three and between spades and clubs (hint, one is for digging, the other you hit people with), you can play bridge.
We will start with the basics and there will be no fancy bidding to remember. No prior card game experience is necessary. If you are interested, please contact *El Presidente*

Something Interesting:

U3A Meadowbank Winter Series 2025

The Winter Series are back after many years. Exciting times. Show your support.

When: Wednesdays the 9th, 16th and 23rd July 2025, 1 – 3 pm

Place: St Chads Church, 38 St Johns Road, Meadowbank

Presenter: **Dr Gay Williams**

Topic: Artificial Intelligence

Cost: $50.00 for three sessions

Including: Afternoon tea

Places are limited. Bookings are open for members of U3A Meadowbank from now until Monday 19th May, when they will be opened to the general public.

U3A Meadowbank Winter series are back after many years. Come and support our organisation.

Book by paying $50.00 for each attendee to the U3A Meadowbank bank account

Kiwibank account number 38-9014-0359752-00.

Enter “winter series” and your name as reference for the transaction.

Remember, book now to make sure of your place.

Movie Time anyone?

Two films.

Two films, still showing at the Lido cinema (such a nice place to go, not expensive, lovely attendants, cinemas are a good temperature, good place to meet for coffee) are worth a look, despite their almost self-consciously feel-good nature. They are:

"Tina", a warm characterisation of the eponymous character, showing the liveliness and warmth of Samoan culture. The music is lovely. The only downsides are the somewhat unlikely premise that a top Christchurch school doesn't have a choir and the unfortunate depictions, amounting to caricatures, of the head Pakeha characters. If you might be offended by this, you shouldn't go.

"The Penguin Lessons", starring Steve Coogan as a somewhat unlikely English teacher at a top boys' school in 1970's Argentina, as well as the eponymous bird. The story is basically that Steve is not doing well, but he rescues a penguin from an oil slick who changes his life for the better. Steve dazzles with his dancing at a Uruguayan nightclub and the penguin is charming. His fellow teacher and the school's headmaster veer towards caricature again but stay just on the right side. Reality intrudes in the shape of the Argentinian military coup and the ensuing crackdown. Some redemption ensues.

By coincidence, as I mentioned before, we watched "The Two Popes" which features quite a long sequence showing the Argentinian military coup and crackdown. This was more gritty than "The Penguin", one cannot unsee the shot of bound, live prisoners being rolled off the ramp of an Argentinian military plane into the sea. **John Goodman**

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
President: u3ameadpres@gmail.com	Groups Coordinator: u3ameadconv@gmail.com

Next Monthly Meeting: Monday 19 May 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 JUNE 2025 newsletter items is THURSDAY 29 MAY 2025. Expect receipt confirmation.

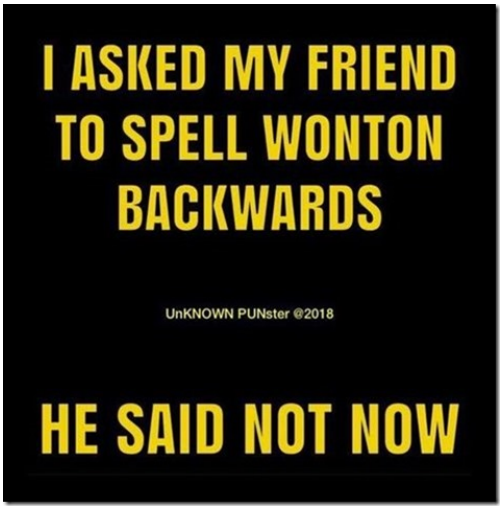
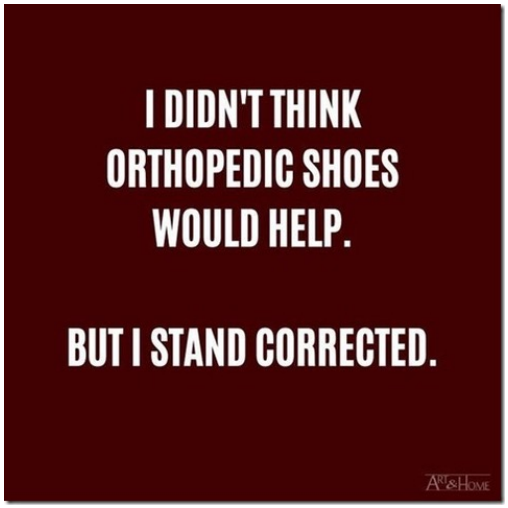
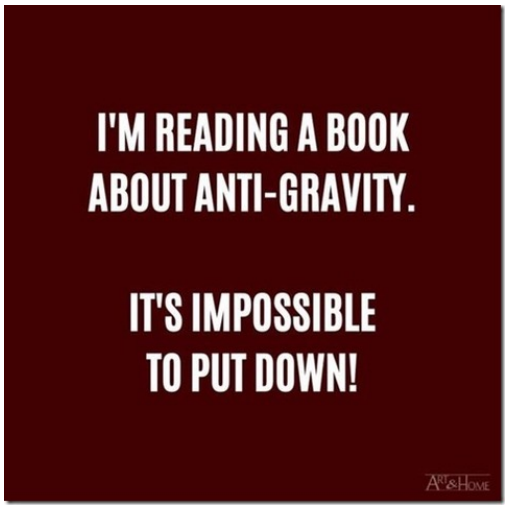
Something Amusing

Two of Winston Churchill's best known quips …

Churchill was arguing with Nancy Astor. In exasperation, Lady Astor exclaimed, "Winston, if I were married to you., I'd put poison in your coffee!"

To which Churchill replied, "And if you were my wife, I'd drink it!"

George Bernard Shaw once sent Churchill a note with an invitation to see Shaw's opening night performance of Saint Joan. The playwright wrote "I enclose two tickets, one for yourself and one for a friend, if you have one."

Expressing sorrow at not being able to attend, Churchill wrote back, "Unfortunately, I cannot attend opening night. Can I exchange these for tickets for the second night, if there is one?"

Very Punny