

Learning for Life

Volume 16, Issue 1, February, 2023

Our next Members' Meeting will be on Wednesday, February 22nd from 10 am till 12 noon at **Nelson Suburbs Football Club, Saxton Field, Stoke**. The speaker is our own U3A member, Dr Lance Jennings, who is a specialist in Virology and has been instrumental in the development of influenza control strategies for New Zealand, including the introduction of free influenza vaccine.

Pandemics; what is in store for us in the future?

The lessons from the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic are very pertinent; we must learn from these and be better prepared for the next infectious disease emergence. Understanding the natural ecology of novel viruses and their global surveillance is pivotal, as is the understanding of the complex human responses to public health measures for their control. COVID has benefitted science substantially, and led to better public understanding of diagnostics and preventive measures.

Topics covered in this Newsletter:

- President's report
- Subscription notice
- Extract from newsletter of Wymondham U3A in the UK
- Two articles on starting and setting up a new study group
- Speakers for 2023 meetings
- U3A anthem
- Funnies

President's Report

Happy New Year and I hope 2023 will be happy, healthy and successful for us all.

We are well and truly underway with the U3A year, and thank you to all who have already paid their 2023-2024 subscriptions, due March 31st. Paying anytime from now does save this busy Membership Secretary from having them all arrive at once!!

We will talk more about our 2023 plans at the General Meeting on 22 February, but suffice to say, with SeniorNet Nelson disbanding and their two groups becoming U3A Groups, we have exciting times ahead.

As always, our wonderful Study Group Co-ordinator Steven Shaw, is very keen to hear from members who would like to start new groups, either something we have had before, or something entirely new. We used to have six Write Your Life groups, and we are now down to one. At this time in our lives, I am sure our families would love to be reading about the exciting things we all got up to in our early years!

See you soon
Wendy

Subscriptions

These are due by 31st March. The annual subscription is **\$30 per person. All subscriptions are to be paid by Internet banking, and there are three options.**

- **In your internet banking, transfer the money from your account to the U3A Nelson account and be sure to include your initial and family name.**
- **U3A Bank Account Number is 03 0703 0385648 00**
- If you are unfamiliar with internet banking, you may go to your own personal bank and ask the teller to transfer the money from your account to the above U3A account and in particular ensure that they include your name in the payee's details.
- Alternatively if you don't use Internet banking, take your cash to a bank and ask the teller to pay it into the U3A account as shown above. Again be sure to ask the teller to put your name in the Particulars part of the payee's information so that the Membership Secretary can immediately see who paid the money in. Get a receipt too!

If you are unsure if you have already paid, please contact Wendy Cornish at tonyandwendy@xtra.co.nz, or ring 544 2794 and she will help you.

Carol and Steve Rogers from Wymondham U3A in the UK are currently on holiday in New Zealand. While in Nelson they were hosted both by our Walking Group and by Wendy and Tony. Below is an extract from their January U3A newsletter. Website: www.wymondhamu3a.org.uk



Nau mai. Haere mai - Welcome in Maori.....

... and we have certainly been made to feel most welcome here in New Zealand, especially by fellow U3A members.

We are in our first month of a three month stay here in the South Island of New Zealand, currently staying in Nelson at the top of the south island. Having initially contacted the president of the Nelson U3A, Wendy Cornish, we found out that many groups and meetings had already finished for Christmas. However, we were put in touch with the convenor (leader), Judy Pittman, of their walking group and joined them for 2 walks. We were even invited to attend the group's Christmas lunch - an al fresco affair at a Riverside Community Café. We have to admit that Christmas trees, Santa, snowmen etc do not seem right in the warm sometimes hot, sunny weather!

We are also joining the president, Wendy, for Christmas cake and coffee next week. She is even hoisting a union flag on her flagpole at her house in our honour and to help us find our way!

We hope to meet up with other U3A groups when we move on to our next 2 stops in Alexandra and Dunedin. What a great organisation U3A is. Carol and Steve Rogers

Something to fill this gap!

Never ask a starfish for directions

Exercise? I thought you said extra fries.

I'm old enough to know better, but young enough to do it anyway.

I put my phone in aeroplane mode, but it's not flying.

What did one ocean say to the other ocean? Nothing, they just waved.

The following two articles on study group were circulated to members in June last year, but as we start 2023 it is timely to publish them again. Hopefully they will stimulate interest among some of you to step up and offer to convene a new group, so please read on.....

Starting a study group

I've been a U3A member for almost ten years but as a *participant* rather than a *convenor*. Last year I wondered how hard it could be to start a group of my own. It turns out, it's easy-peasy!

First you have to choose a topic you're passionate about, in my case it's Apple Macs. Next write a couple of sentences that describe the topic and what you hope to achieve through the meetings. Decide how many participants you'd like - I have a maximum of 8 including myself. Because U3A groups generally meet at our homes, the size of the group is mainly dictated by the size of your lounge and the number you can seat.

Email the information to Steven Shaw, the Study Group Co-ordinator: steven.shaw51243@gmail.com

Stephen will let all members know about your potential new group by email and on the U3A website. He publishes your study group details and the maximum participants. Those U3A members who are interested in joining leave their contact details with Steven and he forwards the list to you.

The final step is that you contact each of the interested members, usually by phone so that they can ask questions about your group. You can ask them which is their preferred day and time for meetings and, hopefully you can all come up with a common venue, day and time that suits your participants. My group meets at 3pm on the first Wednesday of the month at my home, but you can arrange to move the venue on a rotation if you prefer.

You can use teaching aids like YouTube videos, music CDs, podcast recordings or guest speakers, if your topic is best suited to indoors. However, you might like to convene at outdoor venues: for instance garden visits, cinema outings, or walking routes.

That's it! Simple. Our meetings last about two hours, but we have a half-time break which is always a good opportunity to socialise. Oh, don't forget the bickies! We have decided that the participants can take turns to bring cakes or biscuits each month. I provide the tea and coffee!

And so, with the minimum of effort, a new U3A study group was born.

Roger Pittman

Setting up a new group

Below are a few things to consider when setting up a new study group. This is not at all a mandatory list. Like Roger Pittman's article you saw previously, it's meant to take the worry out of becoming a convenor.

Topic

Be sure to choose a topic for which you have strong enthusiasm, not just a passing, lukewarm interest. The first couple of meetings might well depend on your energy and input.

Have a clear picture of what the group is about, any parameters that matter, possible constraints and the like, whilst at the same time allowing for the natural evolution of the group as it progresses.

Write a short description for the website so that potential members know what they're signing up for and of course to advertise the group

Give some thought even to the name of the group to reflect the content/activity/angle and to attract participants.

Venue

Many groups meet at the venue of the convenor, but by no means all. There's no reason why there can't be some kind of rotation if that's what members want. And of course, the nature of the group might well require a different venue every time e.g. gardening, walking, nature studies.

Times

Convenors usually set day(s) and times when they first offer a new group -- we're all busy after all. But some convenors renegotiate times and days at the first meeting to suit participants. Some days, of course, are more popular than others and so likely to cause clashes for possible members. I can give some guidance about that but there's not a lot I can do.

Numbers

You need to establish a maximum for your venue, how many your sitting room, say, can comfortably accommodate. If there are several venues, you would have to go with the constraints of the smallest, not the largest. It may also be helpful to have in mind a minimum below which the group might not really be viable.

Technology

Many groups make use of technology of one kind or another, TV with YouTube and such websites, DVDs and others. If your group is going to depend even to some extent on tech, is yours reliable --- waiting can be a killer.

Programme

Planning the content of sessions sounds daunting, but is really not so difficult as it appears. In the first session, groups usually discuss and settle on a programme at least for several meetings and usually different members take responsibility for preparing and running a session. Some topics e.g. language learning, don't fit quite so easily into that kind of democratic approach, but in general, the more interactive sessions are, the more enjoyable they will be.

Convenors' responsibilities

The U3A Nelson website, <https://www.u3anelson.org.nz/>, has a page outlining the responsibilities Convenors have when running groups, so there is no point in repeating those here.

First steps

Email me with your proposal and I will spread the word among members. You can also take advantage of General meetings where you can give a short plug to members present --- past experience, however, suggests that there will be fewer than 100 people there so you will not reach even half of our active members that way. I then enter the group on the system, advertise it among the membership and keep you posted about numbers.

Finally, I'm always here at the other end of the keyboard in case you get stuck or need any advice or help.

Steven Shaw, Study Group Co-ordinator

study@u3anelson.org.nz

Speaker programme for General Meetings, 2023

3-May-23 (AGM)	Jason Balla	Choir conductor - https://ncma.nz/blog/teachers/jason-balla/
28-Jun-23	Gerard Hindmarsh	Gerard Hindmarsh: preserving stories of Nelson's backcountry.
23-Aug-23	Emma Stevens	Author of the Alaskan memoirs "Walking on Ice" and "Nesting on the Nushagak".
25-Oct-23	Paul Deacon	Marine artist. He has a set of 70+ images relating to his years at sea as Captain of small merchant vessels around northern Europe and other places. He keeps the narrative interesting & entertaining and usually includes reference to his marine art.... an extension of his maritime heritage.

Thanks to Judy who found this in her archives. It originated from Farnborough U3A in England
(last line changed to suit Nelson).

U3A Anthem (sung to the tune of 'Blowin' in the wind')

How many times did you say in your youth?
You'd never be old and grey
You said you'd never shirk and you'd never give up work
And retirement seemed a million miles away
But the time has come around and very soon you've found
You need a way to keep old age at bay
The answer my friend is to join a U3A
The answer is join a U3A

How many groups can you fit in a week?
Five, six or maybe even more
You've joined astronomy and you've traced your family tree
Played bridge, chess and learned to paint and draw
You can walk, dance and sing and do almost anything
Why don't you get the time to mop the floor?
The answer my friend is you joined a U3A
The answer is you joined a U3A

How many times do you think to yourself?
The garden needs a weed and a dig
The fridge needs a clean coz the cheese is turning green
And the pile of ironing's getting rather big
You need to clean the loo but have better things to do
And what the hell - you couldn't give a fig
The reason my friend is you've joined a U3A
Yes the answer my friend is you joined a U3A
You joined the Fabulous Nelson U3A

1. The surest sign that intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe is that it has never tried to contact us.
2. As I've grown older, I've learned that pleasing everyone is impossible, but irritating everyone is a piece of cake.
3. I'm responsible for what I say, not what you understand.
4. Common sense is like deodorant. The people who need it the most never use it.
5. My tolerance for idiots is extremely low these days. I used to have some built in immunity, but obviously there's a new strain out there.
6. It's not my age that bothers me, it's the side effects.
7. As I watch this generation try to rewrite our history, one thing of which I am sure; it will be misspelt and have no punctuation.
8. Turns out that being a "senior" is mostly just googling how to do things..
9. Sometimes the Universe puts you in the same situation again to see if you're still stupid.

From the Editor

Thank you to those who submitted articles. Reports from study groups are welcome, especially if your group has vacancies, as this is a good way to showcase what you do. Photographs also help to make the newsletter more interesting and colourful. **Deadline for articles for the April newsletter is April 10th.**

Trevor Lewis