

U3A WARKWORTH ~ *Learning is forever*
PO Box 520 Warkworth 0910



NEWSLETTER

The Festive Season December 2011-January 2012

Greetings from our President – Beulah Heaven

U3A has been good to me. I think it was about 1990 and was living in St Heliers, when I heard about this group called U3A and thought I'd like to join. I was told that I'd have to wait for about a dozen people to die before I'd be able to. But a lovely group of folk from Remuera U3A got together with a few of us and we started the Meadowbank U3A. There is a Network Group with representatives from U3As all over Auckland and they are so very helpful and sharing with information that they should be more widely recognised. One of our Committee has just attended a Network meeting and I'm hoping she'll share the experience with us. And also tell us what's new and interesting.

U3A offers so many different opportunities in so many ways without asking anything in return. I'm willing to bet that no-one has been a U3A member for three or four years without forming lasting friendships. Like anything, I guess the more you put in the more you get out, but there's minimal pressure and huge options available. This is my last letter to you as your President. I shall be standing down at the next meeting which is also our AGM. So please do get your nominations for Officebearers and Committee in in good time

and front up for our AGM (if only for the Mince pies.)

There have been people swimming at the beach today, and though I'm far enough away to not see what shade of blue and how wrinkled they are when they come out, I do admire them. Somehow those early swims seem so brave and essentially kiwi! For some reason my first swim of the season seems to get later and later, while my last swim of the season gets earlier and earlier. Can I put that down to wisdom do you suppose? I'm certainly not wise enough to know why one of my hens died. Or when Paddle will stop growing, or indeed if this will be the year that I'm finally able to harvest some zucchini.

But what would life be without challenges? We love them and hate them but they certainly keep us busy and give us something to talk about. As a Christmas and New Year wish, I hope each and every one of us finds the courage and temerity to enjoy/thrive/meet the challenges life throws our way over the next year. Carpe Diem!

Beulah

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### ALMONER

Mary-Alice Ryburn has been appointed our new Almoner. If you know of a member who is sick or bereaved please let Mary-Alice know – phone 425 0536 or [ryburn@clear.net.nz](mailto:ryburn@clear.net.nz) - and remember that she would rather be told three times than not at all!

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RECENT SPEAKERS

At the last General Meeting of the U3A the main speaker was Elvie Perrin. We have known of Elvie's mysterious trips to Rumania, and now we know the intriguing story behind them.

Elvie briefly discussed her daughter, Nadine's, O.E. history, and told how, on one of her two trips to work on a kibbutz in Israel, she had met a girl whose family was involved in helping underprivileged people in Rumania. This story struck a chord with Nadine, and she went nannying in Scandinavia in order to earn enough money for her to visit Rumania. Once there she became involved with Special Needs children in an orphanage in Medias.

She felt, after a little while, that she was unable to help the children sufficiently, so she returned to New Zealand to enrol in a counseling course before returning to Rumania. She was able to complete her course there with the help of a mentor. She found the conditions for many children most distressing. Girls who were abandoned by their parents, or were orphaned were living on the streets, sleeping in sewers to keep warm, and had very little support at all. These children she helped by providing food and clothes and talking to them of their plight.

She was often told of a man who also helped the girls, and eventually she met this kind man, and no doubt to the pleasure of "her girls", the two were married and have since worked together to improve the lot of some of these abandoned girls. They live with the girls in a large old house with a wonderful garden and this provides a stable base for the girls to have an education and find employment. In 2002, Elvie and her husband went to Rumania to help with the provision of equipment for the orphans, and while there, their son-in-law took them on a tour of Rumania so they were able to see a different side of the country. They found the rural Rumanians much more friendly and were given many offers of hospitality.

Rumania is now part of the European Union and living conditions have improved somewhat, but there is still a need for the help provided by Nadine and her family, which now includes two daughters of their own. The orphanage is run with help from family, friends and charities and as you can imagine, Elvie is very proud of the work of her daughter in Rumania.

Valma Gidman

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How do you teach a blind child to read?

Anne O'Brien talked about making books for blind children. Her professional work as a teacher in New Zealand and as a contract teacher trainer in California is a great background for her current commitments to being a Grandma Helper at one school and part of a small team of volunteers working at Homai College under the guidance of Robin Nation, a creative and skilled co-ordinator, constructing books for blind children. Anne's focus has always been on infant learning with a commitment to introducing young people to the excitement of words and language and the lifelong joy of reading for information and pleasure. This work at Homai fits neatly into her personal dedication to education.

She brought with her many examples of tactile books and took us through the making of them, step by step, to the amazing finished product - a book designed for little fingers to feel in detail the illustrations while differentiating between shapes and textures and letting their imaginations build mind pictures. The pictures are accompanied by the written word designed for the parent or sibling and this text is overwritten in Braille for the child. The books form a lending library and are available to blind children all over New Zealand.

*I don't believe Braille  
will ever not be. It gives a  
blind person the ultimate  
independence. Robin Nation*

My favourite book was the Mixed-Up Stories where the cardboard pages were divided into four sections and each section had a particular motif at the top left hand corner - for example, a star. By getting each section lined up with the appropriate motif the child then has a complete story to follow through. An ingenious educational tool and very popular it seems because these particular books are in constant demand.

Iris Mee

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 5th December 10am Totara Park

Duty Group: History

Speaker : Jim McKinlay
Copper Mining on Kawau Island

Special Christmas morning tea

The Duty Group is asked to set up the seating and tea preparation before the meeting and to tidy and reinstate the rooms afterwards.

First meeting in 2012 will be held on Monday, 13th February and the Music Appreciation will be on duty.

U3A WARKWORTH

ELCTION OF OFFICERS NOMINATION FORM FOR YEAR 1ST JANUARY - 31ST DECEMBER 2012

Position of : **President** or **Committee Member** (Please strike out one)

Nominee name: _____ Signature: _____

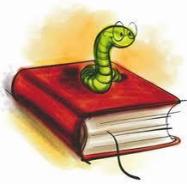
Nominated by: _____ Signature: _____

Seconded by: _____ Signature: _____

Please mail this form to U3A Warkworth PO Box 520 Warkworth to arrive by Friday 2nd December or bring it to the AGM on Wednesday 30th November 2011

GROUP REPORTS

Book Reading



We are a group of fourteen members who review our current reading and recommend good books to each other. There is a diversity of interests in the group which of course is reflected in the reading preferences. Biography, travel and art are all popular subjects but novels, detective and crime all find themselves under review by our group. Hilary Waymouth has been our very conscientious convenor for the last two years but 2012 will see Jenny Noakes in the role. New members are welcome.

Iris Mee

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### Play Reading



Our little group has had another successful and enjoyable year. We are small in number (14) but we look forward to the hospitality we receive as we visit the homes of members all over the Warkworth area and we can be seen toddling up the various paths, a smile on our faces, our scripts in our hands, ready for another reading.

The membership has sadly lost some, but happily gained some, (all female it must be said), with just a lone male who vainly tries to keep the balance. We don't consider ourselves actors but do greatly enjoy the chance to read some of the greatest plays ever written having had the books in our hands for the preceding month.

In the last year we have covered several different playwrights from Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw to Bruce Mason.

Plays we have read include 'Julius Caesar', 'The Pohutukawa Tree', 'Major Barbara', and 'Pygmalion'

Peter Millar

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Auckland Network

On Friday 4 November, as the representative from our Committee to the Auckland Network of U3As, I went to a meeting in Remuera Road. As an ordinary member of U3A, I had no idea that there was such a thing as a 'Network', but in fact it is a very worthy group of representatives from the 21 U3A groups from all over the Auckland area from Warkworth to Franklin. It was established to help new groups get established and to provide support to each other.

At this meeting, general matters were discussed and then one member from Browns Bay, Garry Clarke showed two DVD's about U3As in Australia and the U.K. Garry is considering making a similar DVD about New Zealand groups. It was all quite good fun, and emphasized the difference it had made to older people to have the opportunity to expand their horizons and enjoy a more sociable life than they had experienced before. Let's not take it for granted!

I also discovered, to my surprise that our Warkworth U3A has a website, www.U3A.co.nz, about which Garry was most complimentary. Hands up who, like me, didn't know about this? We have Alan Spicer to thank for this facility. He has been maintaining the website for several years now, and we are grateful to him for his continued involvement. Do take the time to look it up and find out more about us and about Warkworth – it is something else we can be very proud of.

One other thing which was emphasized at the Network meeting is the fact that each U3A is completely autonomous and is free to run their own affairs in their own way - and finally they also emphasized that we are **not** clubs, but **societies!** Be aware of the difference

Valma Gidman

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## BOOKS REVIEWED

### **Parrot and Oliver in America** by Peter Carey

The story is set in the period towards the end of the French revolution. Oliver is the son of an aristocratic family who insist that he leaves France to avoid the turmoil and uncertainty as the new order is established. Parrot is a printer and engraver who, as the result of a variety of adventures, has ended up as a servant, directed to accompany Oliver as both spy and protector.

The unlikely pair sets sail for America and their experiences of love, money, incarceration and democracy bring them together to form an unexpected friendship. Not an easy read, especially the story of Parrot's early years, but one I thoroughly enjoyed. If you enjoyed **Jack Maggs** also by Peter Carey, you should enjoy this.

In a totally different vein is **The Double Comfort Safari Club** by Alexander McCall Smith. This is one of a series set in Botswana and involves Mma Ramotswe and Mma Makutsi in adventures involving detective reasoning as they solve problems presented by their clients in Gaborone and elsewhere. The solving of each case involves that mixture of commonsense and philosophic wisdom which is typical of these two lady detectives.

One amusing incident involves a visit to Okavango National Park. As they are propelled through the shallow waters in a makora, the traditional canoe used to move around the delta, the boatman entertains the lady detectives with stories of attacks by rhinoceros or, worse, by alligators. (By coincidence the travel section a recent *NZ Listener* features an account of paddling through this wildlife park in Northern Botswana and mentions the presence of not only hippos and crocodiles but also elephants.)

This is very much a genre book. Once you master the pronunciation of the characters' names you will find this a very witty read.

Cynthia Purdom

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An Invitation to join U3A Meadowbank on their Tour No.5 with the House of travel

North of the South Island *March 21st-30th 2012*

There are still a few places left in this top of the range tour, visiting the Blenheim wine district & Marlborough Sounds, (2 nights) traverse of Molesworth Station, Hanmer Springs,(2) Hurunui, Christchurch,(1) Transalpine rail trip, Hokitika, Punakaiki,(1) Nelson Lakes, Nelson (3), Golden Bay, Farewell Spit and from Nelson back to Auckland.

All travel, all dinners and breakfasts and most lunches, all tours & visits, entrance fees, top of the range accommodation, luxury bus included in the price of \$3850-\$4040 depending on numbers. (twin/share)

If you are interested, please phone Wally or Adele Hirsh on 521-5714 from whom full itineraries and registration forms are available
wandahirsh@orcon.net.nz

The programme so far : Tour 1: The Deep South of New Zealand; Tour 2: The Red Centre Australia; Tour 3: Vietnam and Cambodia; Tour 4: The Far North of Australia....all big successes!

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**NB** I have heard that there is going to be a **QUIZZ** at the **AGM** – so bring a pen and paper! Editor

## TRAVELLERS' TALES

*Wherever you go take happiness with you ~ Sri Chinmoy*



### Adventures in Patagonia

There were seven of us, three couples and Tony who was a free spirit while his wife visited relatives in England. Fortunately we had Duncan, our young guide who coped well with our eccentricities!

We were budget travellers, staying in basic accommodation and using public transport for most of the time and we all shared a farming background, which led to some strange detours – Tony must have a unique collection of photos of farm gate catches.

We visited the supermercados the local supermarkets, but with no Spanish our food purchases for lunches and pre-dinner snacks were made with a lot of guess work. The purchases were consumed in the most suitable of the bedrooms allocated that night, while we reviewed the day's events. As we were being economical we sampled some dreadful wine and carried some of our cheese too far. Evening meals consisted of vast quantities of beef meat – I did baulk at what was described as “loin of the poor thing” and a “chop of beer”.

Nuki was magnetised by any sign to an “Artesania” –craft centres where economy did not always prevail.

We had adventures too. Our planned visit to the magnificent Torres del Paine National Park nearly didn't happen when the car we hired broke down and we had to hitchhike.

We returned home with a kaleidoscope of memories – a diversity of scenery, interesting places, markets and plenty of interaction with local people. We had fun!

Daphne Halkyard

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END OF YEAR GATHERINGS

Book Group	Lunch at Morris & James	Dec 13	12noon
Food for Thought	Themed vegetarian lunch at 441 Mahurangi West Rd	Nov23	12noon
Food for Thought	Planning Meeting at 441 Mahurangi West Rd	Jan25	1.30pm
Jazz	Dinner & Concert \$25 +BYO drink	Nov 28	5.30pm
Art Appreciation	Lunch at Salty Dog Snells Beach	Dec 7	12 noon
Art Appreciation	Planning meeting 1001 Sandspit Rd	Jan 18	10am
Development of Medicine	Lunch at Puhoi Cheese Café	Dec 8	12 noon
Ancient History	Planning & Lunch at 120 Perry Rd	Dec2	11am
Play Reading	Planning & shared lunch at 3 Mason Hgts	Dec13	11am
Current Affairs	Brick Bay Sculpture Café	Dec 15	2pm

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