



Supporting Lifelong Learning

Howick Inc.
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 May 2024



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General Meeting:
May 13, 9.30am
Howick Bowling Club, Selwyn Road, Howick
Speaker: Conrad LaPointe
Current Housing Crisis and how to fix it
10-minute speaker: Short Story
Tea team: Travel

2024/5 fees now due: Thanks to those who have already paid. If you have not yet paid, please transfer \$35.00 to Howick U3A using your name as a reference
 B/A number: 12-3040-0556154-00

President's Report

Hi all
 Let's hope this lovely autumn weather continues for a while longer, it has been so good for groups who need dry weather such as walks and talks who visited the Watercare Bird Sanctuary, but maybe not so good for those who have been saving projects for a wet day!
 Welcome to the new committee members Dorothy Viljoen and Lynette Upshire who will be a wonderful addition to the team. We also welcome new members: Glenice Yeoman, Diane Fenner, Colin Harris, Sonja Karon, Annette Shields, Mary Cutting, Hugh Martin and Mike Dubey. We also have two new groups, Psychology and Sociology. This all means some great times ahead, especially if it only rains at night.
 June Poole

Editorial: Over the years, I have worked in a few helping roles, such as Youthline, Lifeline and as a family support worker, so I found Colleen's talk last month very interesting. While most, if not all of us have either known someone or ourselves been in the position of needing help, it has been a tradition in the past to see people in mental distress as other, perhaps even "not normal". Yet mental health challenges – especially at times of loss, intense change or perhaps financial insecurity – are an integral part of the human condition. And for some, these challenges are lifelong. It is often during the most intense psychological "breakdowns" that great personal growth occurs, and it is not surprising that, for a time, it may not be possible to perform one's usual tasks within the family or at work. In my roles over the years as a listener and supporter, I have often been let into the lives of complete strangers, and I have always believed that to be a great privilege. And at times when I have needed the same assistance I have always valued those – whether friend or professional - who have responded with empathy and support. As human beings, we live in a society, and we are all interdependent. We are all in this life together – no-one is truly "other", however marginal their life may seem.

May Speaker: Conrad LaPointe



Conrad is the Chief Executive of Habitat for Humanity Northern Region. He has a BA in International Development and MSc in Architecture. Prior to working with Habitat Conrad worked in the International Development field, predominantly in the Middle East. Conrad emigrated to New Zealand in 2009 and currently resides with his wife Wendy in Laingholm, Auckland. They have four children, all of whom have left home, allowing their parents additional and welcomed focus on gardening.

Title: The current housing crisis and ways to fix it

Talking point: Habitat's delivery in NZ and overseas.

April speaker: Colleen Rigby



Colleen gave us a very useful talk on “psychological first aid”. Just as we check safety of surroundings, then whether the patient is breathing, their pulse rate etc before calling 111, we can offer psychological first aid to assist a person in crisis to get help. Studies have shown that thirty percent of people suffer mental distress, but few come into the health system. These days, many organizations are offering training for people in psychological first aid. The steps that are often suggested are the four L's:

1. Look for changes – notice body-language, flat voice, self-blame
2. Listen actively to encourage the distressed person to express their feelings and issues
3. Link with professional assistance
4. Look after yourself through self care

If you notice a friend or colleague start to lose weight, seem “flat” or anxious, or pulling back from their usual activities, it may be time to explore whether they need help. Mental distress can be due to isolation or changes in circumstances. Sometimes the person will be worrying about finances, or may have suffered a loss. They may be anxious, or be having physical symptoms of stress. The person might talk non-stop, or may have periods of blankness. They may be suffering from sleep disturbances, and having difficulty concentrating.

Don't pressurize to the person to talk – rather than say “why are you so upset?” reflect back what you see. “You seem to be unhappy at the moment”. If you get the emotions wrong the person will correct you. Don't share your own story, and don't give advice. Men may tend to react with anger, women may feel anxious or guilty. Women may either seek solace in food or, on the other hand, eat less, and more often seek support from friends – men are more likely to turn to alcohol or perhaps sex. Once a person opens up to you, ask them how you can help, and try and stay by their side and reassure them as they process their feelings.

If you feel the person needs professional help, you can suggest it to them, but unless you are concerned for their safety, don't nag, just be understanding and patient as the person will need to take things at their own speed.

There are various ways to link to professional help. The first port of call is often the person's G.P, who may be able to refer their patient to a suitable therapist. There are various types of therapy – based on mindfulness, or CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy), or medication. It is important to find the right therapist – which may involve a bit of trial and error. For mild problems, talking therapies can often help, but severe anxiety or depression may require medication for a while. There are various crisis and helplines – Lifeline, Youthline and Suicide Helpline to name a few. You can freecall or text 1737 at any time for support from a trained counsellor. Unfortunately, follow-up services are lacking, so it may take time to find ongoing help.

Various new medicines and therapies, such as ketamine and “magic mushrooms”, are currently being trialled and used, along with online apps and even AI therapy.

Commonsense things that may also help are spending time in sunlight to help with depression, diaphragmatic breathing to help calm anxiety, and, of course, healthy eating and regular exercise.

Finally, when supporting another through a mental health crisis it is important to take care of yourself. While you must keep confidentiality, it is fine to talk to a trusted other about your own feelings and needs. In summary, look, listen, ask, reassure and link to professional assistance.

Resources regarding this topic are attached with this newsletter

From the committee:



U3A Howick website: To become a follower on our website, just google u3ahowicknz.co.nz and then click on the bottom right corner of the home page where it says Follow and enter your email address.

U3A Facebook page: Join this facebook group (u3ahowick) for interesting information and updates.

From the Convenors:

Len Nel will be convening two new groups this month – Sociology and Psychology. Please contact Len if you are interested. Ph 0276627234

Opera Group Report for March '24. LUCREZIA BORGIA

The Borgia Family, descendants of a noble line, were originally from Spain but established roots in [Italy](#). There the family became prominent in [ecclesiastical](#) and political affairs in the 14 and 15 Year hundreds. The house of Borgias produced two [popes](#) and many other political and church leaders. Some members of the [family](#) became known for their treachery.

Alfonso de Borgia (1378–1458) established the family's influence in Italy and became Pope [Calixtus III](#) in 1455). His son Rodrigo Borgia was a cardinal of the Roman Catholic church and in 1492, became Pope [Alexander VI](#). Rodrigo with his mistress Vannozza Catanei fathered a number of children, one of whom was Lucrezia Borgia, who became a patron of the arts and was notorious in Renaissance Ferrara for her beauty, political intrigue and suspicious deaths that surrounded her and her family. The family began to decline in the late 1500s, and by the middle of the 18th century it had disappeared.

In 1501 Lucrezia's 3rd marriage at 21 years was to Alfonso I d'Éste who became the Duke of Ferrara. The marriage contract was drawn up in August 1501 but as he was marrying her very much against his will, he didn't show up for the actual marriage. In spite of this they lived together for 18 years and they had 8 pregnancies, although only 4 children lived to middle age. Lucrezia Borgia died at age 39.

The opera is all very simple – Alfonso suspects that his wife has been having an affair with Gennaro. He is unaware of course, that Gennaro is in fact Lucrezia's son from an earlier liason, a fact of which Gennaro himself is ignorant. He is a member of a faction that hates the Borgias because of the family's history of corruption. The opera deals with the actions leading up to, during, and on Gennaro's demise.

Donizetti's operatic portrayal of Lucrezia Borgia is one of the most demanding roles for a soprano, and only such accomplished stars as Joan Sutherland have risen to the challenge.

We all agreed it was Donizetti's grandest opera in both production and topic.

Out and about:

- Writers' Festival takes place 15 to 19 May – bookings are now open through Ticketmaster
- Auckland Museum has several exhibitions; Wildlife photographer of the year, Through the Eye of the Lens, a digital photo exhibition and Te Ra, the only customary Maori sail in existence
- Uxbridge Theatre: Fridays at 12 – Fridays 17 May to 5 July \$5.00 door sales. School Music performances
- Polish Heritage Trust Museum in Elliot Street have various upcoming exhibitions. For details, visit: www.polishheritage.co.nz

Groups(yellow=closed * members welcome	Date 2024	Venue	Topic	Convenor
Anthropology 3 rd Thurs 10 am	May 16	4A Paton Road	Amazon the Lost Tribe	Betty Reid 534 9895
Architecture 1 st Fri 10 am	May 3	1/139 Clovelly Rd	Palaces: Versailles and Schonbunn	June Lamborn 535 8069
Book Discussion 4 th Thurs 1.30 *	May 23	129 Pah Road	Books	Susanne Morgan 0211852020
Civilisations 3 rd Mon 1 pm	May 20	1/73 Frank Nobilo Drive	Carthaginian Empire contd	Linda Stubbs 0272975601
Comparative Religions 4 th Monday 1.30pm	May 27	Howick Baptist Care Home Lounge	Christianity	Margaret Nicholls 021344083
Current Affairs* 2 nd Wed 1.30pm	May 8	11 Shelly Beach Parade	Protests by schoolchildren/traffic in Auckland	Jan Naish-Wallis 027 220 3777
Dinner Club 3 rd Tuesday 6pm	May 21	Thai Passion, Cockle Bay		Jan Naish-Wallis 027220 3777
Earth and the Universe 4 th Tues 10 am	May 28	BM Theatre	TBA	Clive Bolt 534 2946
Famous & Infamous 1 1 st Thurs 10 am	May 3	Cinema lounge Dannemora Gdns	Jiang Qing aka Mme Mao	Gill Muggleston 534 9863
Famous & Infamous 2	No meeting		In recess	Margaret Nicholls
French Circle* 4 th Fri 1 pm	TBD	French Film Festival	Movie	David Dwerryhouse 0210315416
Gardenz 1 st Tuesday 10.00am**	May 7	Domain	Winter Gardens, Auckland Domain	Linda Stubbs 0272975601
History* 3 rd Tues 10 am	May 21	BM Theatre	Social implications of Crimean war – Lyn Catherine the Great - Ron	Judy Lee 535 8547
History New Zealand 2 nd Thurs 10 am	May 9	40 Ellesmere Cresc Pakuranga Park Vill.	Pot pourri	Alan La Roche 534 7366
History of NZ2* 3 rd Tuesday 2pm	May 21	39 Devon Road	“Contributions of the Jewish Community to NZ” contd.	Graeme Diver 0274728033
Literature 3 rd Wed 10 am	May 15	32 Butley Drive	Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night, by Angela Cullen	Judy Wilson 576 6340
Military History 2 nd Thursday 2.00pm	May 9	TBA	Pot pourri	Derek Priscott 5344293
Mobile photography* 3 rd Wednesday 1.30pm	May 15	1/19 Butley Drive	Removing unwanted objects from photos	Colleen Rigby 0272916781
Movies * 2 nd Mon, 12.30 pm	May 13	11 Shelly Beach Parade	TBD	Jan Naish-Wallis 027 220 3777
Opera 4 th Tues 1.15pm	May 28	BM Theatre	Light Relief	Geraldine Rose 5371917
Psychology 2 nd Thu 1.30	May 9	7 Tainui Road	New group	Len Nel 0276627234
Philosophy 1 st Mon 10 am	May 6	3 McMillan Place, Howick	Courage, led by Sue Townson	Christopher Nixon 5343843
Science. 4 th Wed 10 am	May 22	BM theatre	Pot pourri	Jim Hine 534 4259
Sociology 1 st Thursday 1.30pm	May 2	7 Tainui Road	New Group	Len Nel 0276627234
Travel 1st Wed 10 am	May 1	159 Pah Road	Java, Bali and Lombok, By Lyn Van Rij	David Teape 5336103
Walks and Talks 3 rd Fri 9.30 am	May 17	Cnr Robert Rd and Riddell Road	Tahuna Torea	June Poole 021583893 Goeff 0211154560
World of Art 1 3 rd Mon 10 am *	May 20	31 Lansell Drive	Australian street art, Cold War art, Lucien Freud	Garry Law 0275665764
World of Art 2 3 rd Tues 1.30 pm	May 21	BM Theatre	Don Binney by Dorothy Viljoen	Philippa Wilson 5342558
World of Music* 4 th Wed 1.00 pm	May 22	5/23 Wellington St	TBA	Julia Forsyth 021 164 1664
Writing 2 nd Tues 1.30 pm	May 14	13A Anure Place	Final Destination	Mary Kennedy 02102250341

