



## March 2020, Newsletter One

### What is U3A?

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is an international movement whose aims are the education and stimulation of mainly retired members of the community—those in their third 'age' of life. It was founded by Peter Laslett, of the UK, in 1981.

The purpose of U3A is to:

- Encourage further learning by listening, understanding, contributing, researching and participating in discussion and relevant excursions about new topics.
- Tap the great reservoir of knowledge, skills and experience of retired men and women.
- Provide a venue for the meeting together of like-minded people to learn, contribute and to make new friends in their local community.

*“Those who teach shall also learn.*

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Peter Laslett - U3A Cambridge, 1981

This is particularly true of U3A which calls us to active learning, often beyond our comfort zone. This provides the zest and excitement of research and discovery about topics which, in our busy working lives, were completely inaccessible to us.

### How does it operate?

First, there are guest speakers. These are held at the Senior Citizens Hall, turn up for morning tea at 10.00am, with the intention of starting at 10.30am. So far, we have five guest speakers lined up for 2020: Oke Blaikie, Jenny Pollack, Wendy Parr, Chris Bennett and Julian Maclaren. Some of these are from within Golden Bay while others have been lured over the Hill. (More on this later).

But sitting still and listening to a lecture does not meet Laslett's definition of 'active learning', whereas participation in an Interest Group may well do so. This is the second, and most important, aspect of U3A. In Golden Bay, we have 125 current members and 18 Interest Groups. The groups are usually held once a month in somebody's home, and may have 6-20 members. Ideally, all members should belong to at least one of these groups. There is no upper limit to how many groups a member may belong to. Just time! The real socialising and mind-stretching takes place in these small groups.

## More details?

Please, please, please, go to the website to find more information about the speakers, the newsletters, the Interest Groups (including when in the month they are scheduled), or anything related to U3A Golden Bay. Hazel Taylor has set it up to keep everyone informed and it is EXCELLENT.

<https://u3agoldenbaymohua.org.nz/>

## The guest speakers of 2020

April 17<sup>th</sup>, the speaker is Oke Blaikie, Nelson resident, and a retired judge of the District Court. In a humorous sort of way, Oke likes to emphasise the work of the Family Court, including domestic violence, arrangements for children, and the many difficult consequences which arise. He might be persuaded to expand into the Youth Court, with associated drug and mental health issues.

Jenny Pollock is the next speaker, On 26 June. She is talking of the “weird moons of our solar system”. The universe you have been born into is not only weirder than you imagine, it is weirder than you CAN imagine.

August 28<sup>th</sup> there is Wendy Parr. Our very own Golden Bay oenologist. (Look it up, you ignoramuses!).

Chris Bennett is another of the amazingly talented people in Golden Bay. He is an engineer, talking about some of his roading projects for the World Bank. October 9<sup>th</sup>.

Sometime in November, Julian Maclaren will talk about Artificial Intelligence and the newly formed Nelson AI Institute.

## The Interest Groups

As mentioned, there are 18 Interest Groups, no less, in the Bay. Most of these are full, meaning that the homes where the meetings are held cannot accommodate more people. (If you want to join a group that is full, see later).

Subject	Convenor	Vacancies
Art History: Dutch masters and early 20 <sup>th</sup> C architecture	(Margaret Maloney & Jocelyn Tracey)	None
Art History: Early Renaissance to Impressionists	(Rosamund Arthur & Don Mead)	None
Astronomy	(Paul Taylor)	None
Book Discussion Group 1	(Liz Lee)	None
Book Discussion Group 2	(Margaret Holloway)	None
Classics	(Marian Vlaar)	2
Collecting in Western Culture	(Diane Dacre)	2-3
Early NZ History	(Christine Pullar)	None
Films	(John Pemberton)	None
Life and Times of Shakespeare	(Adrian Maloney)	8
Music Appreciation	(Sheila Climpson & Charles Naylor)	None

Musicals & Operas	(Paul Taylor)	2
New Democracy	(Pat Ballard & Peter Riley)	None
Philosophy	(David Squires)	None
Prehistoric Mysteries	(Piers Maclaren)	None
Saints & Sinners	(Pat Ballard and Robin Riley)	None
Sustainable development	(Chris Bennett) – starts Sept	4-6
TED Talk Discussion Group	(Richard English)	unlimited

## You want to join a Group, but they're FULL?

First, contact the Group convenor (their email addresses and phone numbers are provided on the WEBSITE, see earlier). The chances are, there really is a vacancy on a particular date because someone can't be there. In the longer term, the odd person resigns from a Group for a variety of reasons and you will be the first on the waiting list to replace them.

Second, you can form your own Group. Daunting? Sure it is. But it is achievable. Many have done it and the U3A committee will help you through the process. Note, for example, that there are two Book Discussion groups. That is because the first one was full but there was enough demand for another.

## Possible future Groups

At the AGM, Jenny Maclaren had the brilliant idea of finding out what all the other U3A branches throughout NZ do, and amalgamating those themes. There were about 100 topics! She put posters around the walls and asked members to say if they were interested. These were the results:

All about plants	1 person was interested
Archaeology	1
Chess	3
Climate change	2
Cryptic crosswords	1
Current affairs	2
Earth Science	2
Ecology	1
Everyday engineering	1
Foodies	1
Frontiers of Science	2
Global Issues	1
Investment analysis	1
Joy of maths	2

Justice	1	
Learning Italian	1	
Local History	1	
Maps and world geography	1	
Media views	1	
Memoire writing	2	
Meteorology	1	
Myths, legends, fairy-tales	1	
Nature walks/talks	2	
Petanque	1	
Scrabble	1	(but there already is a GB Scrabble Club!)
Tai Chi	1	
The sea	1	
What is wisdom?	1	
With love	1	

As you can see, there are plenty of ideas, and there is plenty of interest in them, but unfortunately no particular topic has enough takers to make up a Group. (Perhaps you would need at least four people as a minimum). But not to worry! Only half the membership was present at the AGM, so the missing 60-70 members could contact Jenny ([pjsmac@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pjsmac@xtra.co.nz)) to add their names to any one of these, and maybe there just might be enough.

## Next newsletter

There will be three or four newsletters in 2020, depending on the need. You will also be contacted frequently by email, for example if there is a TED talk coming up. Generally, it is preferably to contact members by email some 10 days in advance to give the organised ones time to prepare their calendars, and also one day in advance for those who live more on a day-by-day basis.

Email is a great means of communicating with large groups of people simultaneously and at short notice. Those members who do not have email should attempt to contact a friend with email and ask to be kept informed. Your committee consists of volunteers, and it's a lot of work for them to contact members by phone or snail mail.

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