



U3A Tauranga Inc.

# NEWSLETTER

## January 2016



PO Box 14453, Tauranga 3143

[www.u3atauranga.kiwi.nz](http://www.u3atauranga.kiwi.nz)

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Vivienne Mills: 574-3133

**Vice President**

Position vacant

**Immediate Past President**

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**Treasurer**

Peter Benson: 570-0570

[treasurer@u3atauranga.kiwi.nz](mailto:treasurer@u3atauranga.kiwi.nz)

**Secretary and general enquiries**

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**Groups G to Z**

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**Newsletter Editor**

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Rob Heath 574 6468

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Brian Wood 574 6323

**The Annual General Meeting**  
**of U3A Tauranga Inc.**  
**is to be held as follows:**

**Date: Friday 19 February 2016**

**Time: 10.00 am**

**Venue: Wesley Methodist Church**  
**100 13th Avenue**  
**Tauranga**

**The AGM will be followed by  
morning tea and a speaker.**

**All members are cordially invited to  
attend.**

**Signed**

**Lati Moodie**  
**Secretary**

## President's 2016 Welcome

Welcome to the New Year with U3A Tauranga, and I wish all of you a happy, healthy 2016.

I met a lot of lovely members last year and was thrilled to hear comments such as "I didn't know anybody when I moved to Tauranga, and now I know lots of people"; "What a great organisation, so much activity, and so much choice"; "What a wonderful website, so easy to follow" and "General meetings are relaxed and friendly", plus many more.

The introduction to monthly meetings of the "Meet and Greet" by different groups was successful as it encouraged more group members to attend the meetings. Visitors and new members were made welcome and felt able to ask questions or enquire about groups.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Day in March 2015 was a great start to the year with 250 members attending the day's programme. Thanks to Angela Dold and her subcommittee for making the day such a success.

The committee multi-tasked its way through the year. Everyone on the committee was away travelling at some point of the year, so other members stepped in and took over tasks and roles not previously attempted. We must thank Julia Weiersmuller and Elizabeth Reeves for moving into Committee Support roles during the year, and Diane Moulton for taking over secretarial duties for two meetings. It was also a pleasure to welcome guests to committee meetings during the year to see us in action, or debate certain issues of interest to them or their group

There will be a few changes to committee personnel following the AGM in February: Peter Benson is stepping down as Treasurer after four years in the role, Lati Moodie is not continuing in the secretarial role and Beryl Crowther is stepping aside from the Newsletter Editor role. In addition Jean Garmonsway and Marlene McLaren are stepping sideways to other committee roles and there will be three group coordinators to oversee the 90 plus groups. A new Data Manager position has been created to oversee the changes in the membership data base from Excel to Access, happening January 2016. Change can be positive and it is nice to know that the members who will be standing down are always around to assist if needed.

I look forward to another exciting year of challenges and opportunities and to meeting you at the Annual General Meeting on February 19<sup>th</sup> 2016. Vivienne Mills, President

## **MEMBER PROFILE: Janet Ormsby**

Many members will know Janet and her twin sister Jillian Brown. Janet has made a significant contribution to U3A and her achievements and initiatives have greatly enriched our organisation. I recently had the pleasure of meeting with Janet to discuss her involvement with U3A over the eight years she has been a member.

Janet's background includes many years of editorial and reporting experience, which is reflected in her analytical, communication and creative skills, as well as the many practical ways in which she contributed to U3A. Jillian has ably supported Janet; they are a great team who worked closely together and were instrumental in establishing several new U3A groups.

Perhaps the most innovative of these was the Bucket Group, whose members met in a workshop with a tutor and constructed their own coffins, which they took home to finish and decorate. They were also encouraged to record personal information in a "My Final Workbook". The group ran for several years and raised community awareness of the need for more openness and discussion about dying. Although U3A



Tauranga no longer runs the group, Janet was a pioneer in the field.

Among Janet's other initiatives was the Singing for Joy group, which has been very popular over the years and is still active. Both Janet and Jillian are also still involved in Pen Whisperers group, which they joined initially, and whose members write both short spontaneous stories and longer more

considered works.

Janet also contributed significantly to U3A during her four years on the committee. One of her valuable initiatives was the introduction of an Excel database, which transformed the way our membership records were handled. Excel provided a useful and dynamic format for recording members' details and enabled statistical data to be generated in the form of monthly tables, reports, comparisons, and trends over time as the membership grew. This was a significant move into the technological age, which was further refined by other members over the years, until recently, when a new Access database has been developed. In addition Janet reformatted the Members' Handbook, creating a more modern and user friendly layout, which all of us in U3A look forward to each year.

Janet has made an enormous contribution to U3A and we have benefitted greatly through her involvement over the years. She has enriched the lives of many members – a wonderful legacy! (Kit Divehall).

## **New Group Co-ordinators.**

### **Anne Withy.**

As one of the new group co-ordinations for U3A this year I am taking a step into the unknown! (Viv made it sound very simple role but I suspect I have been outwitted). I have been a member for only 12 months and know I have a lot to learn.

I came to Tauranga from the Rangitaiki Plains in the Eastern Bay after 50+ years farming there with my husband, and together raising our 5 children. I was actively involved in our farming business and at times over the years I managed the financial affairs of another business and a primary and secondary school.

I was born in Gore in Southland and received my secondary education in Timaru, South Canterbury. I met my husband in Wellington when we had both returned from overseas, me from Australia, he from the USA and Britain, hence I have strong ties to many parts of our beautiful country and am ever thankful for that.

I am looking forward to getting to know many more U3A members in the coming year and trust you will give us support as we come to grips with our new roles.

### **Marianne Lammers.**

I was born in the Netherlands and have lived in Indonesia, the Netherlands, Canada, and since 1969 in New Zealand. I have two adult children and a granddaughter.

I trained as a nurse, was part of a medical research team for Auckland medical school, co-owned a horticultural export business and managed it, have set up victim support in the South Waikato, worked in a library and then went back to university to get a doctorate in psychology. I was a counsellor at university student services, have taught psychology at university, have managed restorative justice in Court, have run rehabilitative group therapy in prison, and have conducted clinical supervision.

I recently retired and relocated to Papamoa. I joined U3A and found it an excellent way to meet new people and to keep my brain active. I will be looking after groups starting with the letters D-L.

### **Kathleen Fraser.**

Hello - I am the new co-ordinator for groups A – C.

I moved to Tauranga in 2012, after spending 13 years in Australia. After joining U3A in 2013, I became a member of Hikers 1 and Opera Appreciation 2. In 2014 I became convener of the Opera group, and last year I also convened Hikers 2. Unfortunately, due to health problems I am no longer hiking, and felt that a co-ordinator's job would give me another interest.

My background during my working life was as an office worker, followed by over twenty years as an Early Childhood teacher. I have two children and five grandchildren, all of whom live overseas. This situation ensures that I travel frequently to keep in touch. My other interests include gardening, reading, classical music and films.

## **Group News.**

### **Christmas Day Group:**

The Christmas Day group had a very good day, there were 11 members altogether. Everyone brought a plate and a present. The weather was nice and people were able to take their lunch outside whilst others sat around the table. The Christmas fare comprised of ham, chicken, cold meats and salads, and to follow we had Christmas pudding, sweet mince pies, fruit salad and lots of other tasty things, including a Christmas cake. It was beautifully iced and tasted delicious. There was a lot of talking and once we were replete, Santa organised the distribution of the presents.



### **Art History:**

We have a waiting list for Art History but need 2 or 3 more members to start another group. If you are interested in this subject please contact Marlene McLaren.

### **Opera 2:**

There are vacancies for this group owing to members moving from the area. If you are interested in Opera and would like to join this group please contact the Convener, Kathleen Fraser, phone: 576 2175 or Jean Garmonsway.

## **New group suggestions:**

### **Mah-jong for Beginners:**

The Convener of the Mah-jong group has volunteered to teach Mah-jong to beginners, commencing February 2016. We have 2 members on the list for this but we need 2 more to start the group. If you are keen to learn Mah-Jong please contact Jean Garmonsway.

### **Italian Conversation:**

We have enough members interested in learning Italian. The tutor has indicated that this group could start in February 2016. If you would like to add your name to the list please contact Jean Garmonsway.

### **Spanish for Beginners:**

If you would like to learn Spanish from a very basic level please contact Jean Garmonsway.

## **Groups Closed:**

### **Spanish:**

The Spanish group has closed due to decrease in the numbers. We would like to thank Bonnie Leonard for all her hard work to keep this group active.

## **News of Conveners:**

### **Pen Whisperers:**

Mary Koukourakis has resigned as Convener for the Pen Whisperers group. Many thanks to Mary for her hard work with this group. Thanks also to Alison McLean who is taking over as Convener for this group. There is 1 vacancy in this group and if you would like to join the group please contact Alison, phone: 542 3995 or Jean Garmonsway.

### **Philosophy 1:**

Judi Spencer, who was the Convener of the original Philosophy 1 for a number of years, died on the 9th January 2016 in Matua Rest Home. Judi joined U3A Tauranga in 2008. She was the Convener of the original Philosophy 1 group for a number of years, taking over from Phyl Shearer. She contended with deafness all of her life. In later years Judi

had a cochlear implant which she said changed her life, and she gave enthusiastic presentations on the benefits of the procedure.

### **Opera Appreciation 1 - Some Off-Beat Operas:**

In November 2015 Opera Appreciation 1, the one based mainly in the Mount and Papamoa, met in the home of one of our members in Te Puke, a famous first.

We did the opera "Norma" by Bellini, chosen by our hostess, Susan Hall, a Maria Callas fan.

Those who have seen the film "Iron Lady" with Meryl Streep playing Margaret Thatcher may have noticed that when Thatcher went to the opera it was Bellini's "Norma". Perhaps she saw a parallel between Norma, a very strong minded woman, and herself.

The opera was composed in 1831, reasonably well received then, and later conducted by the great Richard Wagner himself, but it then sank into obscurity. It was rescued almost single-handedly by the stormy Maria Callas, particularly in performances at the Metropolitan Opera New York in the 1950s.

Sadly she never committed her performances to film/video and today we only have the LPs, and CDs.

Our performance on DVD featured the famous Canadian tenor Jon Vickers and the renowned Spanish soprano Montserrat Caballe. We all agreed the singing was absolutely outstanding. It was an open air performance staged in Turin, Italy. No one in our group had ever seen "Norma" performed live.

The choice points up the policy of the group, to do many less well known operas. We don't do "Carmen", "Aida" and "La Boheme" every month.

Over several years now we have done operas like Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine" with Placido Domingo, Puccini's "Girl of the Golden West" set in the Wild West, an unusual setting for an Italian composer. He composed it after a visit to America, where he saw it as a play by David Belasco and was inspired.

We did "Tales of Hoffman" by Offenbach, better known for his "can-can" music from "Orpheus in the Underworld". We did Giordano's "Andrea Chenier" set in the French Revolution, reportedly the favourite tenor role of Beniamino Gigli.

Three years ago we did an obscure Rossini opera, "Armida".

In December 2015 we wound up the year with Bizet "The Pearl Fishers" with its famous tenor-baritone duet that New Zealand Railways use in the TV advertisement. "The Pearl Fishers", set in Serendipity (modern day Ceylon/Sri Lanka) sank into obscurity, like "Norma", for many

decades. The New York Met, for instance, have not performed it since the days of Enrico Caruso, 1916.

We look forward to 2016 with another blend of well-known and not so well-known operas.

Rob Heath, Convener phone; 574 6468  
New members always welcome.

### **Astronomy Group:**

At present we have a small band of keen members who enjoy learning and discussing anything to do with astronomy, ranging from what is current in the night sky to the latest in space travel, cosmology and beyond. Sometimes the topics range quite widely. We encourage people to participate where possible, and should members feel inclined to do a little research and present their findings in the form of a short (ten minutes or even less) talk, we welcome that.

This year we have connected up with the U3A "On Line" course in astronomy and we think this will prove to be particularly useful.

We meet at members' homes, as arranged, on the first Monday of each month from 1.30 pm. to 3.30 pm, and after the meeting continue chatting over a cup of tea or coffee.

### **Web Development Group:**

<http://www.u3atauranga.kiwi.nz/>

This is your web site, please assist to keep it current and correct. Email [webmaster@u3atauranga.kiwi.nz](mailto:webmaster@u3atauranga.kiwi.nz) with any alterations or additions needed.

The web development group needs articles of interest, about groups or information that will be of interest to your fellow members. You can be a contributor for the U3A Tauranga web site.

## **Hikers 1 Group:**

Trip to Taupo: Ten members of the group and three friends enjoyed a 4 night stay at the Tauhara Retreat Centre at Acacia Bay, Taupo from 27 to 31 October 2015.

We arrived late afternoon and settled into our accommodation; couples staying in the cottages and the single members in the bunkrooms. We enjoyed dinner and lots of chatter before bedtime.

The next day our first hike started at Huka Falls, crossing the bridge past the viewing areas for the Falls. The track climbs to the cliff tops with great views of the river. It gradually descends and continues along the river to the Aratiatia Hydro Dam and rapids. We got to the lookout point in time to have our lunch before the dam's control gates opened to allow the rapids to flow, a spectacular sight. We then walked back to the Huka Falls – a good 4 hours or more of walking. We went to the Mosaic Café for coffee on the way back to Tauhara.

The second day the weather report was not good so we went to the Waipahihi Botanical Reserve. This was founded in 1966 to rescue 35 neglected hectares from conversion to a housing subdivision. Today it is a wonderful park of NZ forest trees and native plants and a refuge for bird life. There are lovely picnic spots and beautiful lake and mountain views. There are 2000 rhododendrons, and azaleas and camellias. The colours were amazingly vibrant and beautiful. There are also bush and fern walkways as well. We spent 2 hours in this peaceful beautiful haven. The weather was sunny and warm!!!

We carried on to 2 Mile Bay and enjoyed our lunch by the lake, then walked to the end of the path around the lake and back to the cars. We finished the day with a wonderful swim at De Bretts Hot Pools – we had one 'boy' in the group who enjoyed many trips down the slide!!!

Our last day saw us drive to Kinloch and start the hike to Kawakawa Bay. There were great views of the lake as the track climbs from Whangamata Bay and sidles along the cliff top. The bush is dominated by rewarewa and some giant matai, also beautiful pungas and tree ferns. We reached the rocky lookout after 2 hour, then down to the lake edge at Kawakawa Bay. We had our lunch here and returned by the same track. It was a total of 6 hours hiking so we were glad to get our boots off and enjoy an ice cream before heading home. A great achievement for the whole group!

We came home the next morning having had a wonderful time exploring new places and enjoying the company of this great group of friends. A big thank you to everyone for all their help with dinners, dishes and organising!!!

Thelma Cane, Convener.



## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Subscription notices have been emailed or posted to members. Many thanks to those who have paid promptly.

Being a paid-up member of U3A enables you to attend or join any group that has a vacancy.

If you have not received a subscription due notice, please contact our membership secretary: Winn Tipping ph.570 2370

## General Meetings

Held on the 3rd Friday of the month at 10.00 am  
in the Wesley Church Hall,  
13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Tauranga.

**The speaker for the meeting on Friday 19 February** will be Doug Hendy, who will be talking about his business providing puzzles, crosswords and similar to most newspapers throughout New Zealand.

### Members' Forum

The editors would like to reach more members. If you have something to comment on U3A Tauranga, we ask for contributions of about 50 to 100 words. Printing will depend on available space in each newsletter.

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### **Facts and Figures to Date**

Membership as at November 2015:	773
Groups	86
Courses	5

**The next newsletter is due in March 2016.** All contributions must be in before 28 February 2016. They should be short, about 200 words, and may be edited.

**Editor:**                    **Kit Divehall**                    *phone 576 8100*