



Taradale U3A Newsletter

August 2023

PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS AS AN ELECTION LOOMS:

So, it's another election year. Politicians seek our votes, presenting their views of what they think will ensure a decent future for our communities. Prejudices are translated into policies with legislative power to enact them. Some policies clearly favour the already well off and those who want to keep their position at the head of life's queue. Others sketch out a future where wealth is more fairly shared, and everyone has a secure, reliable and respectful place within the community.



Some who seek our vote are convinced we need to give priority to policies that protect the global environment. Others agree but only if it doesn't inconvenience them and their friends. Different dreams and proposals meet, diverge, and are eventually voted on. Elections are a time to share our dreams of what could be and how we might get there. Those seeking our vote frequently sugar-coat their promises and truth is sometimes a casualty. Yet for all the posturing and half-truths that surround elections, they represent an important marker of who we are, what we hope for, what binds us together and what divides us. They're to be taken seriously; part of the glue that holds us together for better or for worse. I recall, as a polling booth worker, seeing elderly, recently arrived refugees weep as - for the first time in their lives - they placed their freely-decided vote in a sealed box. It was a symbol of their belonging, that they mattered, that they were taken seriously. At the time, I reflected how casually, and unthinkingly, other voters engaged in the same important celebration of belonging. Others simply ignored this civic obligation. Sad.

I have lived through twenty-nine NZ elections. During my span, I have lived under twenty different Prime Ministers, most, but not all, of whom were elected on an election day. Some were re-elected, others served for a single term. One served twice. Three have been women. I can recall their names: S, F, H, H, N, H, M, K, R, M, L, P, M, B, S, C, K, E, A, H. No prizes for being able to name them, recall their impact, their contribution and the events that shaped their times! Who served longest? Who served the shortest time? I have voted in seven electorates, a couple of times at an overseas NZ embassy. When I first voted, a voter needed to be twenty-one; in 1969 it became twenty, and then eighteen in 1974. Perhaps when I no longer vote, the franchise will be extended to sixteen-year-olds. It must take courage to put your name forward as a candidate and invite your fellow citizens to pass their collective judgement on your suitability. Voting is a privilege to be treasured. The alternative is to just let me (or you) make all the decisions!!!

Hmmm....

Keith

Combined meeting - comment

In May this year, our autumn gathering - which was open to all U3A members - was held in conjunction with the **Community Affairs** group for the first time. This was well attended, with the excellent speaker, Dr Richard Meech, being appreciated by a somewhat wider audience than usual. Comments to the U3A committee have since indicated that most people felt that sharing meetings and speakers could be a successful and practical way to draw the U3A community together.

Erin Mahoney

Editor's Note: *This is a matter which will be considered further in the coming months...see: **How are we doing?***

How are we doing?

At the last meeting of the Committee, we decided it was time to reflect on how we are doing as a U3A branch and whether we need to do some fine-tuning to enhance the life and work of U3A Taradale. As a result, we are planning to hold a reflection and envisioning workshop at All Saints Church, Taradale, from 10.00am to 1.00pm, on October 18th.

This being so, we plan to invite specific members to join with the Committee on this occasion. If you would like to be present and to share in the workshop or, if you would like to contribute through a written comment or suggestion as to how we may enhance the life and programme of U3A Taradale, you may like to contact our secretary, Yvonne Huckson, phone 021 149 5415, email yhuckson@gmail.com.

We have identified three broad areas or aspects of our U3A for exploration at the workshop:

- U3A visibility in the community – publicity, website, brochure, a community facing project? (remember the speech competition which needed to be discontinued.)
- Development/initiation of new groups and support of all groups and convenors, long-term and short-term groups, retaining a variety of groups to meet the interests and needs of members.
- Regular (monthly or quarterly) gatherings as a U3A family (including AGM and Christmas) - venue, programme, speakers. What do we hope to achieve on these occasions? What of the apparent overlap between the hugely successful Community Affairs Group and our "Town Hall" occasions?

The Committee sees this workshop as an opportunity to reflect on how we are doing and to identify ways whereby we may enhance the life of *Taradale U3A*. It's the sort of regular review any lively organisation engages in.

Keith Rowe
President.

GROUPS:

Community Affairs

It was with something approaching dismay that members of this group learned of the impending retirement of Convenor Richard Gregory whose more than capable hands and organisational skills have guided it for the past four years or so.

The imposing array of speakers he managed to coerce into addressing these monthly meetings has never failed to delight the audience who owe him an enormous debt of gratitude. He even managed to arrange several highly successful field trips, including those out to the *Cape Kidnappers Sanctuary* and *Hohepa*. Among his personal favourites were presentations on *Riding for the Disabled* and, more recently, the one by Jenny Dee who apparently held everyone spellbound speaking about how science is taught and promoted in schools.

Rather than resting on his laurels, Richard has decided to increase his number of days' very worthwhile voluntary work driving for the *St. John's* shuttle service, so our loss is their gain.

Disappointingly - and most unusually - August's guest speaker, the Environmental Officer at the *Port of Napier* (who was supposed to speak about what had been done to relocate penguins getting in the way of construction work at the port) failed to turn up without any explanation. Perhaps he got cold feet!! (joke)

Although she admitted to knowing very little about penguins, Franki James (former U3A Committee Member and current U3A Newsletter Editor) stepped into the breach. She not only gave an off-the-cuff talk on having spent most of her life in the thrall of Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson, but she has also offered to take over the reins from Richard following his last meeting as Convenor in September when our speaker will be **Dr. Emma Ensqilant** who will talk about clinical trials carried out by pharmaceutical companies.

Our continuing thanks to Barbara Stillwell and Carol Dacey for organising our morning teas on these occasions.

September Combined U3A Coffee Morning/Community Affairs with Speaker

Monday, 4th September 2023

Senior Citizens' Hall, 10 White Street, Taradale.

9.30am for 10.00am start

STORIES OF THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

This group meets at Sonia Mackenzie's home at 10 o'clock on the second Thursday in the month. We have morning tea and then begin the interesting part! Each participant reads a ten-minute story from an event in their life or about some of their forebears. Photos to show can enhance the tales and we usually have a short discussion between readings. Contributors are not tied to a subject and are free to attend on only those days that are suitable to them. We also agree that the stories stay within the bounds of the room. I really enjoy this morning and the company of the attendants.

Convenor - Sonia Mackenzie (84448934)

RUMMIKUB

Despite having been highlighted in the last U3A newsletter, with this group appealing for new members, unfortunately none were forthcoming - although a couple of former members did return, having previously dropped out during the pandemic. On the basis of “if at first you don’t succeed, try, try, try again”, perhaps some additional information about the game and its origins might appeal! While [Rummikub](#) isn’t as ancient as backgammon and chess, it has this elegance and mystery that makes it seem so. And its origin has just as much history in it as any other ancient game. Rummikub was actually invented in the 1940s - in fact, it’ll reach its centennial in just a few decades. Its inventor, Ephraim Hertzano, was living in Romania as a young man and, during this time, Romania was under the rule of a strict Communist regime. That regime had outlawed playing cards, deeming them as a “decadent” distraction. However, games are an indelible part of human life, and life always finds a way. The regime hadn’t outlawed tiles, and an enterprising Hertzano emulated melding-based card games using painted tiles. It’s a version of rummy, played with cubes - which is where *Rummikub* gets its name.



Hertzano moved to Palestine in the 50s, before it would soon become Israel, and brought his tile game with him. Hertzano and his family hand-crafted *Rummikub* sets in their backyard and sold them on consignment to local businesses. Its popularity spread throughout the West Bank and Anatolia, spawning a popular Turkish coffee-house game called *Okey*. But *Rummikub*’s popularity really exploded in the 70’s and in a really modern way. American comedian Don Rickles, while on the *Johnny Carson Show*, mentioned how his wife had become a big fan of “the funny game” of *Rummikub* when they visited Israel. *Rummikub* was officially published in America in 1978 and, from then on, it became a fixture in many family homes, its slogan being: “*Rummikub* brings people together”. Let’s hope it might work this time!! The group meets on the first and third Monday of the month, 1.30 – 4.00pm at Mission View retirement village, 190 Avondale Road. To learn even more, please contact Russell Driberg (06 8440303).

MAHJONG

Whether it was the paragraph appealing for new members in the last U3A newsletter or the allure of the smart new Bridge Club room in Taradale is not certain but, in the event, there was a noticeable increase in the number of players who turned up at the last meeting of the *Mahjong* group and in the number of tables that were set up.



MYTHOLOGY

One of the greatest universal themes amongst both cyclical and linear stories of apocalypse is that of the flood. Perhaps the best known of these stories is that of Noah in the Christian religion. There are multiple versions of the flood story in Mesopotamian mythology, which predate written history. Unfortunately, here in Hawke's Bay, now we all have our own tales to tell in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle. And, sadly, the U3A Mythology group was one of the victims, having been disbanded earlier this year having finally run out of steam.

LUNCH GROUP 3

However, Pam Medcalf (who was the Convenor of the Mythology group and who took over *Lunch Group 3* from Peter Newby back in 2020) reports that this group is still going strong with about twenty U3A members turning up regularly at noon on the first Friday of each month. The last outing was to *Habitat on the Quay*, while the September luncheon will take place at *Fusion Flavour Continental* "where culinary traditions collide to create an extraordinary dining adventure" at Nautilus, 387 Marine Parade, Napier South. Sounds irresistible!!

PLAY-READING GROUP

After having been very successfully convened over many years by Catherine Downs and very much enjoyed by its members, this group has sadly ground to a halt.

For further information about the following two groups, please contact convenor **Marion Sturm (06 844 88 72)**:

SCRABBLE

This group, which usually meets in *Taradale Library* on Thursdays from 2-4pm (except during the school holidays when it meets in a private home), would welcome a few new members.

FRENCH

Originally for *Beginners*, this group has gratifyingly progressed to become *Faux Debutants (False Beginners)* and meets on Monday mornings from 1030-1200.

E-BIKES

With a number of our weekly rides using the Tutaekuri and Ngaruroro Stopbanks, we have become creative in planning additional rides since Cyclone Gabrielle closed these biking pathways to us. We have had a couple of Mystery Tours, included having a coffee break at a restaurant offering a speciality as part of FAWC to have the opportunity to try that dish while there. We are also continuing our themed rides to include e.g. viewing the seals along the wetlands past Clive, biking the Bay View to Westshore beachfront in October to view the wild flowers, Frimley Park in November to see the roses. We also included coffee at the cafe of Summerset in the Orchard, the home of one of our members, and a talk about the Dotterels by another member of our group near where they are nesting.



Our yearly arranged trip to ride the trails in a different area of New Zealand led us to the Te Awa River Ride from Lake Karapiro to Ngaruawahia through Hamilton. This is a very accessible and scenic trail following New Zealand's largest river - the Waikato.

8 of our group based themselves in Cambridge and rode the trail over 3 days - 1. A cycle tour around Cambridge then on to Lake Karapiro 2. Cambridge to the Hamilton Gardens 3. Hamilton Gardens to Ngaruawahia.

Highlights included the recently completed, very scenic section of the trail, with many boardwalks to ride included, from Cambridge to Hamilton Gardens, visiting Hamilton Gardens, then evening meals together at Cambridge restaurants, chosen by a foodie in our group and.....the fine weather!

Thank you, Glenys Offergeld!

Some Food for Thought

1. If a bottle of poison reaches its expiration date, is it more poisonous or is it no longer poisonous?
2. Which letter is silent in the word "Scent," the S or the C?
3. Do twins ever realize that one of them is unplanned?
4. Every time you clean something, you make something else dirty.
5. The word "swims" upside-down is still "swims".
6. Over 100 years ago, everyone owned a horse and only the rich had cars. Today everyone has cars and only the rich own horses.
7. If people evolved from monkeys, why are monkeys still around?
8. Why is there a 'd' in fridge, but not in refrigerator?
9. As I've grown older, I've learned that pleasing everyone is impossible, but annoying everyone is a piece of cake!
10. I'm responsible for what I say, not for what you understand.
11. Common sense is like deodorant. The people who need it the most never use it.
12. My tolerance for idiots is extremely low these days. I used to have some immunity built up, but obviously, there's a new strain out there.

Today's Thought (from *Hawke's Bay Today*) sent in by Chris Geddis:

"A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery while on a detour". Anonymous

So often we miss the scenery on a detour, wondering when we are going to get back onto the main road again.

And...



The first senior moment.

Want to send an item for the next newsletter?

The newsletter email address is newsletters@taradaleu3a.org.nz

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