



NELSON

Learning for Life

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Next General meeting will be on 29th October at 10-12 noon at a NEW venue to be advised. The Speaker will be Sir Geoffrey Palmer speaking on "What I Learned in Politics."

NOTES FROM THE GENERAL MEETING

Ellie Boswijk spoke briefly about Nelson's participation in the **Gigatown** Competition and urged us to get involved.

Ellie then talked about her involvement with **WOW** (World of Wearable Art). She reminded us WOW started in Nelson but the move to Wellington was essential for its continued growth. This year's show was the 26th and the number of competitors and audiences has grown phenomenally. WOW has contacts with schools of design in China, Australia and North America and about half of the designers this year were from overseas. Ellie is delighted that Nelson contestants still manage to compete successfully. WOW is supported by prestigious organisations including RNZ Ballet, Weta Workshops and the NZ Government. This year sees the first overseas tours taking aspects of the show internationally, including 30 selected garments. It opens at Auckland War Memorial Museum in November and proceeds to Australia and North America. It will be supported by videos and printed material about the show and its history (in which Nelson is prominent). A second

international exhibition will be launched towards the end of 2015.

Peter Sutton, secretary

Grant Sidaway, the CEO of SeniorNet NZ, qualified designer in telecommunications, helped set up NZ SeniorNet 22 years ago. He's a motivational speaker in technology and travels the country addressing groups.

Technology has moved at tremendous pace and Grant likened it to a wave. Like surfers, to keep up you must remain ahead of that wave. Grant used the acronym TOYS – Technology Offering You Solutions. Twenty years ago the mobile phone was like a brick and there were just 50 web servers worldwide. Today Google alone has over one million servers and 200 billion emails are sent per day. There are 1.5 billion Smartphones and 6.5 billion mobiles but only 1.3 billion fixed landlines.

Today, Google Glass spectacles enable the wearer to access the internet, take photos and videos etc. In the field of health there's remote monitoring of a patient's condition. Under development are contact lenses that access the internet and measure blood glucose. Networking via

social media, started with Facebook and has a huge worldwide following.

What's Hot? Grant had a small 3D printer on display and showed examples of what can be produced from plastic using this device. Future possibilities with this technology are many, especially in the medical field. There's Voice control of appliances around the house, Smartphone apps to enhance the capabilities of your phone, Tablet devices, Home Media and Ultra-Fast Broadband.

Grant shared a method of designing a virtually foolproof password via Bryan Strong of SeniorNet Marlborough Sounds. String together two words from different languages, e.g. Maori/English and use this same combination for all passwords. At the end you tack on a capital letter, a number, and a character. These last three are the only ones you change for each password. Write them down so you don't forget. They are useless to anyone else, provided you are the only one who knows the string they attach to.

Thanking the speaker, **Trevor Lewis** noted Grant's ability to capture his subject and captivate his audience. He pointed out that we should heed Grant's advice to keep ahead of the technology wave.

Trevor Lewis, active in SeniorNet Nelson as well as a U3A member.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Our balance at present is \$4,382.87 after paying \$1,230.50 to Chromyk Graphics, who developed the data base for us. We have accounts for the General Meeting of \$546.00 and \$15.00 for gifts. We are in the process of transferring \$2,000 from cheque account to special interest bearing account.

A member paid the \$20 sub into our

account on 20 May 2014 but with no identifying information. Our Treasurer would like to credit the correct person with their payment so let her know if you are the one!!

Noeline Lawson, treasurer Ph 5468699

U3A NELSON WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

David Atkinson
Robyn Black
Brian Brasell
Bob Gidlow
Mary Toll

NEW GROUPS OR COURSES OFFERED

Australia

There are many and varied aspects of Australia and Australian life to research, discuss and enjoy. Geology, immigration, governance, natural resources, tourism, exports, early explorers, Aboriginal history, achievements in art, literature, sport and music, unique flora and fauna, and that is just to get started! The group may meet monthly on a Wednesday afternoon at 2pm.

Jill Dickinson, group proposer

Ph 5444 679 president@u3anelson.org.nz

Geology

This course is an introduction to the study of the rocks that make up the earth's surface. It's hands on so you'll handle some of the more common types of rock and learn how they differ chemically and in appearance. You'll learn how those rocks are broken up, moved around, polished, and repositioned. Some of the history of life on earth is trapped in rocks and you'll learn how this can be discovered and identified. The course will begin at the end of October and run for approx 8 consecutive weeks. The date/day will be decided once members register.

Alan Matthews, course tutor

Maori Language

Have you been at a Maori gathering and listened to a number of speeches while you are quite unaware of what is being said - in spite of being a Kiwi of long standing? Do you understand the introduction to the 7am news bulletin? Are you comfortable with the ritual when you arrive on a Marae?

So many of us find ourselves feeling uncomfortable with procedures which should be part of our New Zealand heritage. If you are interested, perhaps we can learn sufficient Te Reo together to understand some everyday language and feel confident in our understanding.

Anne Mitchell, group proposer.

Ph 5477274 or study@u3anelson.org.nz

Dicely Dining – The natural poisons in our everyday foods

A few years ago, sales of milk sold in paper cartons plummeted when somebody discovered that dioxin was leaching out of the paper. And, for decades now, organic farmers have been demanding and getting top dollar for produce that they claim is free of pesticide residues. Clearly we worry about poisons in our everyday foods.

Oddly enough, though, nobody worries at all about the natural poisons that taint the plants that we eat every day, even though some are just as scary as dioxin and are 10,000 times more concentrated than any pesticide residues. The flavours of tasty herbs and spices like pepper, mustard, chilli, mint, dill, rosemary, cinnamon, ginger, and clove that delight our palates and liven up the bland staples in our everyday diet in fact are toxins, poisons that fend off plant-eaters. Plants have been defending themselves for millions of years against hungry insects and other animals, including us, that are bent on

eating them, and during all that time they've got very good at it.

This illustrated talk explains what biochemists have learned in recent years about these nasty but often tasty toxins in the foods that we eat every day, including plants that we've grown ourselves in our gardens and that we're blithely convinced are totally free of poisons and pesticides.

Contact Bill Malcolm course tutor.

Ph 5451660 for further information.

Groups that have vacancies

Astronomy, Children's Literature, Classical Music Appreciation, Discovering our Local Birdlife, Electrical Knitting (learn how to connect your internet to your tv), Exploring Nelson Walking Group 2, Hands in the Garden, Irish Group, Problems and Solutions, Scrabble, Travel, Visual Arts, and Write Your Life 5.

*U3A Nelson is a catalyst for getting people together to learn new things. If you have an idea for a group or course, I'll help you get it off the ground. Or if you'd like to register, or know about any of the existing groups contact **Kay Hunter, U3A Nelson Study Group Coordinator, ph 5477274 study@u3anelson.org.nz***

Exploring Nelson (or environs) Walking Group

As the current group is full, another is starting and will meet each 2nd and 4th Thursday at 10 am.

Contact Kay, 5477274

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Travel

The U3A travel group has relaunched. We have 9 members and so far have had two meetings following an initial get together. The group meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 1.30 – 3.30 and each member (or couple) of the group take it in turns to host the meeting at their house. We have developed a long list of topics which we are interested in and have condensed that into a programme to take us through to the end of the year.

At our first meeting we talked about some memorable experiences. At the second meeting we explored the local area talking about places we would take our visitors. The next meeting will be looking at the options and experiences presented by Travel Groups e.g. Friendship Force, Rotary Travel groups, House Swaps, as well as experiences of living in other cultures and communities. This will be followed by a discussion about travelling in South and Central America and the following meeting will be about Cruises and Cruising. We are hoping to write a brief report about each meeting which will include travel ideas and tips and post it on the U3A website.

Because it's a Travel Group, we have discovered, not surprisingly, that group members are often away travelling!!! Consequently we have room in the group for 3 or 4 more members if anyone is interested. If you are interested please contact 5477274 study@u3anelson.org.nz Or if you have questions please feel free to contact me on 542 3599 or by email: gtsuddab@gmail.com.

Gordon Suddaby, group convenor



Up the Garden Path group visited Bob Chittenden's home in Pugh's Road.

Here they are looking at Chinese quinces. From left Bob, Lyn Falconer, Dulcie Carson (behind), Pauline Schweder, Robyn Gordon, Jill Ford, Alison Roxburgh and Barbara Mason.

TED Talks

The TED Talks group spent a wonderful afternoon recently viewing and discussing a presentation of talks selected by Jill Dickinson. In the course of two and a half hours the group was treated to six talks by TED presenters covering a range of amusing, inspirational, surprising, mesmerising, and always thought provoking topics which invoked great discussion between group members. A brief outline of the talks follows:-

Linsey Pollak, an Australian musician and musical instrument maker, took less than 5 minutes to transform a carrot into a clarinet with which he then proceeded to make melodious music. All you need is a drill, a carrot and a saxophone mouthpiece!

Simon Anholt independent policy advisor from UK, claimed in his talk that countries operate independently as if alone on the planet. He called for countries to think outwardly and has developed a scale to encourage them to do so. The "Good Country Index" revealed some surprising

results. NZ was up there, but Ireland emerged as, as Anholt put it, the 'goodest (not the best) country'.

Also on a musical theme, **Bobby McFerrin** demonstrated the power of the pentatonic using audience participation. This led to a fascinating discussion on language.

Rita Pierson, inspirational teacher from the US, in her talk titled "Every Child Needs a Champion", called on teachers everywhere to believe in their students and connect with them on a human, personal level. "Kids don't learn from people they don't like", she contended. Discussion following Rita Pierson's talk threw up a recollection from one group member of a highly amusing song by Tom Lehrer entitled "New Math" and this led to the group watching **Jared Khan's** animated version of the Lehrer song. Recommended viewing!

The afternoon rounded off with 2013 "America's Got Talent" winner **Kenichi Ebina** in "My Magic Moves" blending hip-hop, martial arts, modern dance, magic and a blast of pop culture in a mesmerizing performance in which his body appeared to defy the limits of the human skeleton.

Diane Thomsen, group participant

We have several members on the waiting list for the TED Talks group. The current group watches TED via a Smart TV. But TED Talks are on the radio too. The presenters are chosen for their groundbreaking ideas and their ability to communicate, not for their physical presence! U3A can help you to get your technology organised.

If you would like to help get such a new group underway, phone 5477274 or email study@u3anelson.org.nz

Interesting People and Their Achievements

There would be something wrong if this U3A group was not interesting. The variety of people studied results in members being introduced to interesting people they never knew about. The convenor started off with an overview of a polymath, **Charles Babbage**, known for designing a mechanical computer that was too soon for successful implementation. But there was much more to learn about his achievements.

We had a session on **Trevethic**, another engineering type. We found that **Gwen Somerset** of Playcentre fame was the sister of **Rewi Alley**. This resulted in lots of talk about education. When looking into these people, we have a lot of discussion about their influence and also other matters. Discussion is free flowing and we seem to get into current issues of interest. While science gets a look in with **William Smith** and **Rutherford**, such a session with **Emil Nolde** is needed for an interesting balance.

Paul Bielecki, group convenor

Ballet Group II

The second Ballet Group has been viewing some very interesting ballets recently, courtesy of **Merle Baird**, who convenes the primary group. Each month about 9 of us gather to view and discuss DVDs of ballets. We have looked at a number recently, from the point of view of the choreographer. These have included ballets choreographed by **Roland Pettit**, **David Bintley** and next month, **Kenneth McMillan**.

It is interesting to compare the styles of dance of these productions from the second half of the 20th century, with the more traditional classical ballets. We have found them, generally, more precise and

exacting, more sexually explicit and often more beautiful with their interpretations of the story. Often the use of stark scenery enhances the beauty of the ballet, rather than detracts from it. This, of course may differ between productions.

Roland Pettit's "Clavigo" and "Proust" were 2 ballets we viewed and enjoyed greatly, for their beauty and simplicity, but required considerable background reading to interpret their meaning. **Simon Jeffes's** "Still Life at the Penguin Café", related to conservation and the environment, depicting extinct and endangered animals and birds. It sought to make the audience more aware of the need for conservation, and I thought, was particularly suitable for younger viewers.

In August, we looked forward to seeing **Kenneth McMillan's** challenging interpretation of an historical event from 1889 - "Mayerling". It is based on the murder/suicide of the dissolute Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria-Hungary and his mistress, Mary Vetsera, at Mayerling Hunting Lodge in 1889, triggering the downfall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the August meeting, due to illness and transport difficulties, so will probably view "Mayerling" in September. Alternatively, we have several short ballets, also choreographed by Kenneth McMillan, which we may see instead.

Heather Clendon, joint group convenor

Discovering Some Of Our Local Bird Life

Tuesday August 5th is a sunny winter morning with a strong cold sou-westerly blowing across the Waimea Plain. A "drive-by" instead of our usual wander, 2 cars meet at 9.30 by the cycle trail in Lansdowne Rd. Sighting of birds cannot be planned to order, so we have hopes, but no expectations. With luck we'll spot

cattle egrets, Australian migrants that winter-over in New Zealand, but we'll be all eyes for what the area offers today.

Our slow drive, binoculars at the ready, takes us around the estuary margin; as usual **Pukeko** are scattered across the paddocks and **white-faced heron** feed on the mudflats. 2 birds pecking on the grass verge catch our eye; one positively identified as an **adult skylark** with his jaunty crown feathers and tail-bobbing strut. A discussion about the other, crouching more closely to the ground; similar colourings but no tufted crown, or bobbing tail – juvenile? Or even another species? A **dunnock**? We are all learning together- the basis of this group. Crossing the causeway to Best Island. (**pieb shags** and **gulls** on our left, and maybe a **white spoonbill** far over) Wow! There's a **white heron**, surely! We pull up to check out the kotuku hunched against the wind in the shelter of a sandbank so we can't see his long graceful neck. This must be a non-breeding individual wintering over.

We move on, scattering a flock of **greenfinches**, and park to scan the estuary more closely. A **chaffinch** trills and **starlings** twitter in the pines above us, but nothing out on the mudflats.

Returning to the cycleway, we park and walk to the Nieman Creek picnic table for morning tea. We read local history on the information panel and admire new photographic panels of the skyline. But cold wind, and no birds about, so for morning tea, we sit on the gravels in the shelter of the bank enjoying the sun's warmth.

Sharing convivial chat, we note a **kingfisher** closeby perched on an almost invisible single overhead wire. Looking up, we are treated to the majestic sight of a **royal spoonbill** flying overhead – broad wingspan, intensely white, and distinctive

spoon-shaped black bill and black legs extending. A gift to us for our patience.

Back into our cars and on to explore Cotterells Rd. **Cattle egrets**, migrants from Australia for our winter, hang out around cattle, so this farmland is a possibility. And as if to order, there in a paddock, 4 yellow-billed white cattle egrets, (like small white heron) and several common **white-faced heron**, around a water trough with the cattle. Disturbed by our arrival the egrets fly off out of sight. We drive down to the end of the road and walk up onto the stop bank and cycleway where it crosses Pearl creek. No birdlife about this morning; the information panel gives us local history, and wildlife information about bittern, and other local estuary species.

Returning along Cotterells Rd we discover our 6 egrets have returned, joining the white-faced herons pecking around in the muddy paddock beside the cattle. This time we get a good close-up view.

Today we've seen **3 uncommon "whites"** in open country; in contrast to our recent searching in parks and bush reserves for garden and forest birds.

Grace Sutherland, Group Convenor

A U3A Nelson couple urgently require short term rental accommodation from the beginning of October. Are you or someone you know leaving town and need reliable house-sitters? Or do you know of the availability of a good quality house for rent?

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