



U3A Manawātū

Chairperson's Report

September 12th 2018

Membership has grown slowly over the year to reach 342, with currently 34 learning groups on offer. There were four new groups this year: Apple iPad, Classic Comedy, Existentialism and Writers' Marathon. Two groups, Astronomy and Bookbinding, were discontinued; thank you to Larry Haist and John Garner for coordinating those groups over several years. Cryptic Crosswords has expanded to three groups, while a second Book Group is in the process of being formed. An analysis of learning groups earlier in the year provided some interesting statistics including:

- group size varies considerably. The median size of groups is 11 – the smallest being 5 and the largest 47. 35% of members attend no groups, and 30% attend a single group.
- 16% of members attend two groups, 8% attend three groups, 8% attend four groups, and 3% attend five groups. At the upper end, two people attend six groups, and one person each attends eight and ten!

Group co-ordinators' meetings were held in November and June to report on group activities and discuss matters of interest, including the continuing need for more groups to accommodate a growing membership. Thanks to the continuing leadership and enthusiasm of our 22 group co-ordinators, some of whom co-ordinate more than one group, all our learning groups continue to be in good heart.

Sadly we lost two of our very active members with the deaths of Rolf Panny in February and Freda Larsen in August. Rolf served twice on the committee, lead a number of groups including Symposium, Philosophy, Creative Writing and Art Appreciation, and contributed to seminars. Freda was a long-time member of several groups including Philosophy, Science, Current Affairs and Symposium. Both will be missed by many in both U3A and the wider community.

Thanks to the continuing support of Eastern and Central Community Trust, we were again able to run two seminar series. The Spring series asked us to consider the proposition that 'Small is Beautiful?' We were challenged to think of a future where environmental

degradation may require a return to smaller communities and tribal lifestyles, provided with insights into the small community of Anglo-Indians who migrated to New Zealand from India following Independence in 1947, invited to enjoy the 'little things in life' whose complexity and beauty can only be seen through a microscope, and given a tour of 'flash fiction' through a discussion of 'How short can a story be?'

The Autumn series, 'How does that sound?' included talks on 'The Soundscape in Cinema', a fascinating look at the making of the soundtrack in a feature film, an intriguing discussion on what birds convey in their song entitled 'Birdsong: is it more than pretty tweets?', a foray into the world of linguistics to uncover how analysis of language can be used as evidence in criminal contexts, and the link between Latin American music and key social and political events that have shaped the region. Thanks are again due to Margaret Hazelton for continuing to provide us with varied and stimulating speakers, to Jill Gibson for her creative publicity displays, and to all who contribute to the smooth running of the seminars.

The committee has been active throughout the year, replacing the well-used but aging projector, contributing to the purchase of equipment for the Recording and Broadcasting Group, and purchasing two hard drives on which to begin archiving U3A's material including minutes, reports, newsletters and anything else of interest. Thanks to Graham Slater and Cherry Gordon for their work on these projects. Our treasurer, Jenny Edwards, left us at the beginning of June to return to her native Wales, and we are grateful to Ron Paddock who has taken over the role until the AGM. Bev Charlton is retiring this year after two stints on the committee including treasurer and catering organiser – thank you Bev for all your work.

After producing 31 newsletters, Chris Phillips has handed over the role of editor to Rosemary Krsinich, who produced her first edition in August. Thank you Chris for many years of professional and informative newsletters. I'm sure Rosemary, who is also our excellent secretary, will prove to be a worthy successor. Thanks are also due to Chris for maintaining the website and producing programme and seminar fliers.

Many people have contributed to another busy and successful year, some of whom have already been acknowledged. Particular thanks to the committee members who have given of their time and expertise to keep the organisation running smoothly and, as always, to group co-ordinators who continue to be the backbone of U3A.

This will be my last Annual Report as I am stepping down from the committee after three years as Chair. It has been a real pleasure to be part of a friendly, supportive and knowledgeable committee who carry out their roles with enthusiasm and integrity, and genuinely care about the organisation they serve. Thank you everyone for your friendship and support and very best wishes for the future of U3A Manawatū.

Carol Phillips
Chairperson