

U3A MANAWATŪ NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF U3A MANAWATŪ

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

(as at the time of printing)

Jo-Ann Cowie, Rod Holm,
Christine Ingram, Louise Langdon,
Julia Richardson



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That's Entertainment!

Autumn Seminar Series: "Entertainment"

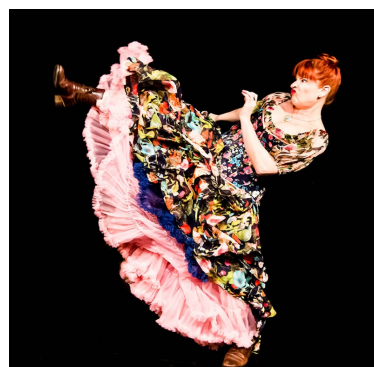
by Stuart Birks (Seminar Series Coordinator)

Our public seminar series for Autumn 2024 looked at aspects of the arts and culture scene in Palmerston North. The four speakers were each able to give an inside perspective on an area of their expertise.

Rachel Bowen opened the series with a local government policy perspective based on her role as Palmerston North City Councillor and Chair of Culture and Sport Committee. Councils have a responsibility under the Local Government Act 2002, "To promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future". This involves facilities, activities and events. These activities comprise about 15% of day-to-day council expenditure. Rachel stressed that culture and the arts are not a luxury, but rather they are significant for the economic benefits they bring by making the city an attractive place to live and drawing in visitors from the region and elsewhere.

Christine Archer-Lockwood described many of the musical activities on offer in the region. She has a wide range of skills as a pianist, conductor and music therapist and has been one of several very active, dedicated leaders since her return to the area some years ago. She described an extensive range of activities, allowing direct participation or attendance in an audience. There are opportunities for young children to participate, including the Saturday Morning Music, now in its 57th year. Additional opportunities are planned. Many of the current and proposed activities are listed in Christine's PowerPoint presentation (see the [Seminar Presentations page](#) of the website). An added bonus was Christine's description of her work as a music therapist and the benefits that such therapy may produce.

Kate Elliott described 50 years of Centrepont Theatre giving us insights into the backstage story. From small beginnings, it grew and survived to be the only professional provincial theatre in New Zealand. We learned a lot about choice of plays, construction of sets, in-house playwriting, audience participation, links and interactions with other facilities in Palmerston North, financial constraints, the working life of actors, and numerous other aspects. There are high upfront costs in putting on a play and it is not always clear how popular the end result will be. Consequently, they cannot afford to try out too many risky productions. Centrepont activities are far broader than simply putting on plays. Other ventures include workshops, script writing activities, improvisation sessions, and corporate activities. Of course, they could do more with extra funding, but the hope is that they can at least continue into the future.



How do we make this work?

- Buy ins
- Co-pro's
- Shared risk
- Write it ourselves
- Produce

Image taken from Elliott presentation.

Tania Kopytko's topic was the Regent Theatre. She gave a full story, starting from the early days of Palmerston North. The design and construction of the theatre, varied uses, changing ownership and notable events were all covered. The 1987 share market crash had a big effect on the viability of the theatre, but the people of Palmerston North rallied round and a Save

Continued on Page 4...



FROM THE CHAIR

Chris van der Krogt

Welcome to the mid-winter edition of the Newsletter.

As many of you will remember, U3A Manawātū ran a very successful autumn seminar series on

entertainment in May this

year. We had four engaging speakers and a regular attendance of 58 to 65 people. If you missed them or want to review a talk, go to the seminar page on our website. Already plans are being made for the spring series which will present the heritage of the Manawātū from four different perspectives.

The Sci-Tech group is now well established (third Friday afternoon of the month) – with more comfortable seating – and Short Course-Humanism #101 restarted in July (last Thursday afternoon of the month). The Understanding Te Reo Māori group would welcome new members (second Wednesday afternoon). As always, you can find more details at <https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz/learning-groups/> (which is regularly updated).

A completely new group, Making sense of the current debates on the Treaty of Waitangi has just begun (fourth Wednesday morning of the month). Contact the coordinator, Rod Holm at ad.rjholm@outlook.com if you are interested in joining this discussion.

The U3A AGM for 2024 is scheduled for 2 pm on Wednesday 18 September in the Friends' (Quakers') Meeting House, College St. We are still seeking a new Treasurer, so get in touch if you have the time and some previous experience. We're also keen to hear from learning group coordinators willing to write a short report on their group for the Grey Power Manawātū Magazine.

Paid-up membership of the U3A Manawātū is currently 264 after deleting non-subscribers from the membership list on 1st July. With some 42 groups, there is plenty of choice about what to do on these cold days.

SPRING SEMINAR SERIES

"Manawātū memories: reflecting on the past, embracing the future" (Provisional theme)

Four Wednesdays 2.15 - 4 pm in Oct/Nov

Crossroads Church, 220 Church Street, PN

Details will be circulated a few weeks prior and will also be available on the website at

<https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz/seminars/>

~AGM~

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at

2 pm on Wednesday 18th September

Venue: Quaker Meeting House
227 College Street

Please contact the Chair, Chris van der Krogt, at [delftnz](mailto:delftnz@gmail.com) or 357 7825 if you wish to be nominated for the Committee



TREASURER NEEDED!



Do you have accounting skills?

We are looking for a Treasurer to join our Committee from September 2024. If you are interested, please contact the Chair: Chris van der Krogt, for more information: 357 7825 or 021 1224701
delftnz@gmail.com

DRINKING COFFEE IN PALMERSTON NORTH

by Ron Phillips

Palmerston North on the wide Manawatu plain, where the wind whips in from the Wairarapa, down the Gorge, to surprise you along the broad streets – where, in a café, there will be no surprises, because you are with Larry and Chris, who come to town each week to drink coffee, that is always good.

You can't do this, because you don't belong here, are a visitor, attending on something he cannot disturb, that is the strength of what lies before you – you are trying to find words for this, for a connection that makes everything approachable, illuminates what Larry holds open in his hands: *Sixty eight*, he reads, *means a six per cent chance*

of not reaching your next birthday. Harsh truth, you reflect, when that's your age, but still the numbers run; when they get to ninety-nine; the percentage jumps to fifty, and Chris recalls a stand-up's joke. *Who wants to be a hundred? – someone who's ninety-nine.* How could an audience laugh, you start to think; why wouldn't they weep instead?

And why, here in Palmerston North, on the Manawatu plain – where the wind whips in from the Wairarapa down the Gorge, may surprise you suddenly on the corner of any street – why aren't the three of you sitting here, not drinking, but crying? – and the answer lies before you in the spent coffee, the scrunched muffins and the scattered unread supplements –

is, precisely, the strength of ritual, the warmth of connection, these words that fly in the teeth of every wind, and something between the words that settles and holds, making what will always be temporary – as temporary as this coffee, these unfinished conversations, as our days here, as all our days – seem temporarily bearable.

Around the groups...

RECENTLY FORMED NEW GROUPS:

Making sense of the current debates on the Treaty of Waitangi

"Initially, this will be a five session series focusing on the Treaty of Waitangi. Depending on interest, it could expand next year into a longer look at NZ History. Literally, 'the Treaty' is nine bits of water damaged rat-eaten paper, but the document has been invested with many meanings over time. Currently it is fiercely contested, and I will apply the skills of History and Sociology to thread our way through the debate. At the very least it will enlarge our understanding of the (sometimes bitterly divisive) issues." Rod Holm

The Group Coordinator is Rod Holm, a teacher of secondary school History for 34 years. Subsequently he retrained as a Counsellor, and then again as a Restorative Justice Facilitator in the Criminal Justice System. In between times he practised as a Funeral Celebrant and to keep himself sane, took up the craft of woodturning. He has a Masters degrees in History and in Education. Since the Covid lockdowns, he has reacquainted himself with recent developments in the interpretation of NZ History, thanks to the Internet.

Meets 4th Wednesday of the month at 10 am, commencing July. Coordinator: Rod Holm ph 021 029 66983 ad.rjholm@outlook.com

Short Course - Humanism #101

'A humanist is a good guest at The Dining Table of Life.' Check this out for what Humanism is:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_DNs86JIF4

Meets last Thursday of the month, 2-4 pm, commencing July. Coordinator Keith Butler ph 021 376 297 keithstclairbutler@gmail.com

New groups can be set up at any time.

See the guidelines here:

<https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Setting-up-a-U3A-Group-v2.pdf>

SPACES AVAILABLE in groups led by John Ward:
Orchestral Classical Music, Comedy, Rail Travel, Ballet and Opera.

Contact the Group Coordinator: Kevin Smidt
kevinroaming@hotmail.com or 022 406 9819 if you are interested in joining.

Learning Programme 2024

The latest version is always available on the website at:
<https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz/learning-groups/>

Understanding Te Reo Māori

by Anne Spring

'Kia Ora Koutou'

Although this is now a familiar greeting in Aotearoa, NZ, it was forty years ago that an Auckland telephonist was sacked for using this phrase while on the job. Since then the revival of Te Reo, the Māori language, has come a long way and most people will be familiar with 'Te Whatu Ora' and 'Waka Kotahi', to use two examples. Those with young relatives may be aware how much more easily they pronounce Māori place names and incorporate Māori words into their diction.

It is perhaps natural to feel a bit resistant and threatened by this change. On the other hand we can embrace it and use it as an opportunity to catch up and learn some language and culture. The Understanding Te Reo Māori group was established to help bring us into the Te Reo picture.

This is not a formal language course. There are no exams and minimal homework. We participate as we feel comfortable and people vary in their facility with the language. However we aim to incorporate all. New people are especially welcome and they start to participate when they feel comfortable. There is no pressure or shame if you don't say anything. We are fortunate to have the assistance of a Te Reo tutor from the Wānanga.



Our Tutor,
Hone, from
Te Wānanga
Aotearoa

As an example of our activities, we recently celebrated a birthday by singing 'Happy Birthday' in Te Reo:

*Hari huritau ki a koe
Hari huritau ki a koe
Hari huritau ki a (...name....)
Hari huritau ki a koe*

You will probably recognise this as a transliteration of the English. Another way is to say 'Rā whānau ki a koe' sung in the same manner. It references the day of your birth and welcomes you into the whānau.

If you are interested in joining the Te Reo group please contact Anne on 021 190 6322 or anne.spring35@gmail.com. No need to wait until next year!

Autumn Seminar Series *(continued from Page 1)*

the Regent campaign was organized. As a result of a major fundraising programme, a quality restoration and upgrade was possible, with the refurbished theatre reopening in 1998. It celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2005, 20 years of the refurbished theatre in 2018, and 25 years in 2023. It serves as a large multi-use venue for Palmerston North, hosting many community activities, but also commercial activities as a source of revenue. A large number of volunteers play a vital role, ensuring the viability of the venue.

If you wish to follow up further, audio recordings and PowerPoint slides from the presentations are available for the next few months on the U3A Manawatu website at: <https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz/seminars/presentations/>

We welcome YOUR contributions to our newsletter!

Contact the Editor
(Details below)



May 1989. Minyak, the circus elephant, wore banners with slogans aimed at convincing passers-by to sign a petition to save the Regent Theatre from demolition. Image taken from Kopytko presentation.

CHANGES TO CONTACT DETAILS

Please advise Anne Spring, the Membership Secretary, if you have any changes to your contact details to ensure you continue to receive these newsletters and any other information from us.

(Contact details below)

**- Remember to make use of our WEBSITE, source of the latest information -
- and an easy way to subscribe: u3amanawatu.org.nz -**

U3A Manawatu

Life-long learning in retirement



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U3A MANAWATŪ CONTACT DETAILS

Mail: PO Box 9076, Palmerston North 4441. **Email:** u3aman@gmail.com. **Website:** u3amanawatu.org.nz

Committee

Chairperson: Chris van der Krogt 357 7825 or 021 1224701 delftnz@gmail.com

Secretary/Newsletter: Rosemary Krsinich 326 9598 rkrsinich@gmail.com

Treasurer: Ron Paddock 357 5857 smallfield48@gmail.com

Membership Secretary (including changes to address/email): Anne Spring 021 190 6322 anne.spring35@gmail.com

Learning Programme: Janet Black 356 6251 janblack@xtra.co.nz, Stuart Birks 021 204 7903 kstuartbirks@gmail.com

Seminars: Stuart Birks 021 204 7903 kstuartbirks@gmail.com, Michael Lawrence

Website: Rosemary Krsinich 326 9598 rkrsinich@gmail.com

Social Events: Janet Black 356 6251 janblack@xtra.co.nz, Claire Barrett 021 379 035 x84661@gmail.com

Enquiries: Chris van der Krogt 357 7825 or 021 1224701 delftnz@gmail.com

Promotion: Janet Black 356 6251 janblack@xtra.co.nz,

Other: Stu Schwartz 359 4423 finearts@taylor-jensen.co.nz

Other: Sue Stirling 021 1274724 susanstirling@gmail.com

Other contributors

Website: Chris Phillips 021 206 9684 chrisphillips@inspire.net.nz,

Technical Equipment: Graham Slater 353 0586 gandg@inspire.net.nz