

Manawatū



Guernica by Pablo Picasso, 1937



The nobleman with his hand on his chest (El caballero de la mano en el pecho) by El Greco, ~1580



Self portrait by Pablo Picasso, 1907

Images taken from the seminar given by Francisco González on 12th November 2025:

"The power of visual language: a brief history of art in the Hispanic world"

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

(as at 24/01/2026)

Christine Archer-Lockwood
Jan Barnett
Kathy Clark
Graeme Clark
Elizabeth Hill
Janice Hill
Elizabeth Kemp
Raymond Kemp
Chrissie Mclellan
Lynaire Milham
Andrew Procter
Berndt Reiss
P Stribling
Margaret Tattersfield
Dennis Thomas
Irene Thomas
Cherrill Suckling
Franco Vaccarino
Anne Weir
Robyn Wilson

IN THIS ISSUE

Notices – pp 1, 2, 7
From the Chair – p 2
Review of Spring Seminars – p 3
Around the Groups – pp 4, 5
Gardening – a short story – p 6, 7
A new book by Beth Weir – p 7
Poem by Corey Taylor – p 7
"Mind Games" – p 8
Contact details – p 9

Changes to your contact details

If you have any changes to your contact details please advise Anne Spring, the Membership Secretary, anne.spring35@gmail.com or 021 190 6322. This will ensure you continue to receive these newsletters and any other information from us.

New email and postal address

Please note our new email and postal address (we no longer have a PO Box). Email: u3amanawatu@gmail.com
Post: 4 Bryant Street, Palmerston North 4412

Contributions to our newsletter

We would love you to contribute to our newsletter! Please contact the Editor, Rosemary Krsinich, rkrsinich@gmail.com or 326 9598

FROM THE CHAIR



*Chris van der Krogt
Chair
U3A Manawatū*

Welcome back to another year of learning, making friends, and acquiring skills with the U3A.

I know I'm preaching to the choir, but these aspirations are not just platitudes. We owe it to ourselves, our families and the wider society to keep our minds active and to maintain social networks. I recently read a Guardian article about the Senioruniversitet in Sweden run "by pensioners for pensioners...amid increased loneliness and a growing appetite for learning and in-person interactions."

We are not a university, but some of the observations still apply to us, such as "the desire to learn for pleasure's sake...in a society which is increasingly obsessed with learning and education as preparation for work."

A new list of 38 learning groups was posted to everyone in January, and updated versions will be available online as changes are made.

I'd like to thank Mike Carter who has just retired from managing four Cryptic Crossword groups for a number of years. There will be at least one Cryptic Crossword group in 2026, and more can be established if there is further demand.

We have seven new groups this year, extending our range of activities into quite new areas. There are now groups for dining and conversation; viewing plays, operas, and operettas; studying Ibsen's plays; making craft books; telling stories; and cross-cultural communication.

If you would like to start a new group, please contact me. The advice page for running a group has been updated recently. It has a lot of information that many group coordinators may not be aware of.

Please remember to pay your 2026 subscription asap if you have not done so already. For most people, the easiest option is to pay by internet banking and then to complete the online form. That way there is no need to post a printed enrolment form.

Happy learning and socializing in 2026! Chris

Setting up new groups

We currently have 38 learning groups running, some of which are currently full. Any U3A member can set up a group so if you have an idea for one, contact Chris van der Krogt to discuss it (see contact information on back page). There are also some general guidelines on our website on how to set up and run a group.

Important notes re group membership

You must be a current member to take part in a group. If you haven't paid your subscription by the deadline of **31st March** your membership will expire and you will no longer receive newsletters, seminar flyers and other notifications from us.

If you are on the mailing list of a group in which you no longer participate, please let the Group Coordinator know so they can use the space for a new member.

Postage Costs

Postage costs are escalating rapidly! To avoid having to increase our subscription fees we are asking our members to select the post option for mailouts **ONLY IF** they are unable to receive email.



Autumn Seminar Series

Please hold Wednesday afternoons in May free for the next Seminar Series. The theme and other information will be notified nearer the date.

Note that the audio recordings and PowerPoint presentations of the Spring 2025 seminar series are available on our website. For more details see: <https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz/seminars/>

A REVIEW OF THE SPRING 2026 SEMINAR SERIES: “Linguistics and Languages”

by Anne Spring

The U3A Spring Seminar series ‘Linguistics and Languages’ was for U3A people who wanted to further their knowledge about the world and its people. Drawing on the knowledge of university based academics, it covered the topic of the uniquely human technology of language. It is not often you get the chance to inspect and dissect this mechanism humans use every day, the properties of which we have utilised and exploited in all we do.

The first two speakers, Dr Celina Bortolotto and Mr Francisco González covered the development of the Spain we know today, from the first tribal groups through the invasion and colonisation by the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans and finally the Arabs. Each brought social and political developments and influenced the language, bringing new words, e.g., ‘plaza’. Eventually Castilian Spanish prevailed. By the late 15th Century Spain began an era of discovery and colonisation further afield, most notably the Americas. ‘Canoa’ (canoe), of Quechua origin, was possibly the first word brought back to Spain from these lands. Other words were introduced via food and culture, ‘tomate’, ‘chocolate’, ‘aguacate’. Because Spain’s history has been so varied and inclusive of so many worldly influences, it is an interesting case study for a process which has occurred around the world. In England, Roman influences were reintroduced via William the Conqueror and so it came to be that the Anglo-Saxon words for pig, cattle and sheep coexisted alongside the more food-focussed beef, pork and mutton.

Aotearoa has its own form of this colonisation. English of course became the lingua franca. Indigenous language suffered a severe set-back but in recent years there has been a vigorous revival. Many anglicised words are common parlance in Te Reo Maori, e.g., ‘Meri Kirihimete’, but in turn English has been changed by the inclusion and acceptance of Te Reo Maori, e.g., ‘kia ora’, ‘kai’.

The many islands of the archipelago of Vanuatu comprise the most linguistically numerous country in the world, being home to 112–138 languages. It is

the study subject for the second speaker, Dr Eleanor Ridge. She discussed how a language comes to be transcribed and what aspects are of importance, which distinguish one language from another. Historically this tends to happen with the dissemination of a religion, usually Christianity. It also leads to the reflection that so many languages are disappearing and whether this process can be reversed. Dr Ridge gave us some lessons in Bislama, a pidgin language with English words but Melanesian grammar.

The third speaker, Dr Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire, is a linguist. A linguist, she said, looks at language the way a doctor looks at the body. Throughout the talk she made a subject that could have been quite dry into a fascinating dissection of language and the interplay with culture, politics and society. She introduced us to concepts such as the ‘schwa’ (a lazy vowel sound) and how an accent becomes hard-wired in the brain. She accompanied her talk with an intriguing little video showing how language can affect a people’s perception of certain things. An African tribal people struggled to differentiate a colour which was obvious to our audience, but then the phenomenon was reversed and it seemed that we couldn’t see a colour obvious to the African people.

In the fourth talk Francisco González returned to wow the audience again with a talk on the power of visual language. The idea of art being political appeared to begin with El Greco, then through Velasquez, Cervantes and Goya. As Spain expanded into the colonies, art was enriched by artists such as Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. Back in Spain during the 20th Century, art reflected the huge upheavals in society, with Picasso’s Guernica being the most outstanding example.

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The U3A audience for this seminar series were thrilled and energised by the engaging range of speakers. Many thanks to Stewart Birks for researching the topic and arranging the speakers and to other U3A members for their help in making it happen. Thanks also to the Palmerston North library and staff for providing the venue and refreshments.

AROUND THE GROUPS

New Groups in 2026

Gilbert and Sullivan Operettas

by Mike Lawrence: Group Coordinator

Gilbert & Sullivan operettas consist of catchy tunes and absurd characters who poke gentle fun at authority, romance and human foolishness.

A different G&S operetta will be screened each month in a comfortable home theatre in Feilding at 10am on the third Thursday each month. **There are spaces left.** Contact Mike Lawrence, ph 06 323 2456 or michael.lawrence97@gmail.com.



International Communication

by Franco Vaccarino: Group Coordinator

In this group, we will dive into cultural identity and explore how culture shapes perception, behaviour, and the way we communicate. Through practical examples and interactive discussion, we will examine key differences in verbal and non-verbal communication — from gestures and eye contact to direct versus indirect styles. We will explore essential cultural frameworks that help us make sense of these differences. We will reflect on our own backgrounds, values, and assumptions to boost self-awareness and sharpen our intercultural communication skills.

When: Second Thursday of the month (starting on 12 February 2026)

Time: 10am to 12pm

There are spaces available.

Please contact Franco Vaccarino (franco@citymission.co.nz) if you are interested.

Making Books

by Marja Steur: Group Coordinator

I would like this group to be a place for anyone who wants to make books, where we encourage each other and share what we know. Creating a book can be a great way to draw on lots of skills/crafts/arts/interests like drawing and painting, stitching and textile arts, writing, paper crafts ... for me that includes collage.

The world of handmade books encompasses a tremendous range, for example professional bookbinding, artists' books, junk journals... Please note that I am definitely not at the precision bookbinding end of the spectrum! I have been making books for over 10 years, love it, and have learnt a lot, but I am no expert. My thing is upcycling, exploring and constructing different book forms using whatever paper and fabric that come my way. To see some examples, go to <https://linktr.ee/remnantsremade>

One thing I learnt is that Henri Matisse was right when he said: 'N'attendez pas l'inspiration. Elle vient pendant que l'on travaille.' 'Don't wait for inspiration. It comes while one is working.'

There is room for more members!



A few books, some stitched, some glued



A collage in a scrappy little book just for fun

New Groups in 2026 (continued)

National Theatre London and Met Opera New York by Christine Archer-Lockwood: Group Coordinator

This group views the live streamed presentations of National Theatre plays and Metropolitan operas, followed by coffee and discussion.
We meet on the relevant screening dates at Events Cinema.

Cost: Current ticket price with Gold Card, \$22

Next screenings:

National Theatre Live:

The Fifth Step 25 & 28 January 1pm

Hamlet 22 & 25 Feb

Met Opera Live

La Bohème 5 & 8 March 10.30am

Contact coordinator for further details and/or to join the group:

Christine Archer-Lockwood, Ph. 027 805 7612
kiwichristine@fastmail.fm



La Bohème



Hamlet

Delectable Dialogue

by Kay Phillips: Group Coordinator

Further to the details in the Learning Programme please note that the group will meet in a cafe each month (own cost). There is room for 2-3 more members.

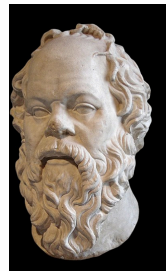
Other New Groups

- **Story Telling**
- **Ibsen: Five Major Plays** (writeup in Nov '25 N/L)

See the latest Learning Programme on our website Groups page for details

Other Groups

There are spaces available in some of our other groups, the **Philosophy** group for example. Contact the Philosophy Group Coordinator, Alan Cameron, if you are interested in joining this group. Phone 358 3848 or email aacameron@xtra.co.nz.



A marble head of Socrates in the Louvre (copy of a lost bronze head by Lysippus)

Hidden Memories: Writing our Memoirs 3

This group is currently full but another group may be set up. Please contact the Group Coordinator, Kathriona Benvie, after 17th February if you are interested, phone 027 6051911, timandkj@yahoo.co.nz

If you are interested in joining a particular group and there is no space available, ask the relevant Group Coordinator to be put on the waiting list.

Oral History Group

The Oral History Group has now broadcast its 400th episode of "[Manawatu Conversations](#)" on Manawātū People's Radio (MPR). There is an extensive collection of past episodes on the Manawatu Heritage website run by the City Archives. Here is the link: [Manawātū Heritage – Manawātū Conversations](#).

GARDENING

by Carol Phillips

If you want a challenge, along with a source of both achievement and frustration, try gardening. To be a gardener one has to be, among other things, patient and forgiving; patient because gardens take time to develop, not always to plan, forgiving because plants don't necessarily behave according to the promises on their label. Sometimes, despite the most tender care, they just sulk, or even turn up their toes and die, and sometimes they grow so large that one battles to maintain even a modicum of control. Take onions for example. It seems that everyone but me can grow onions. Despite coming from the same batch of seedlings, my daughter's onions thrive, while mine remain embarrassingly puny. It must be the soil or position I hear you say. I have checked and done all the right things with both, but still they refuse to grow. Meanwhile, in a year when friends are reporting only a middling tomato crop, mine have almost taken over the vegetable garden, producing hundreds of cherry tomatoes and beefsteak-size fruit on a plant which promised to produce fruit of medium size. Shrubs and grasses which, according to the label, should have been moderate in size, become out of control unless regularly attacked with the hedge trimmer, while the toetoe, planted in what should have been an ideal position, withered and died.

Then there are the unwelcome visitors commonly known as weeds. The poet-priest Gerard Manley Hopkins praised spring, 'when weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush'. Any gardener would agree with 'shoot' and 'long' and 'lush' – but 'lovely'? One can only assume that he never had the job of weeding the seminary garden! I can cope with the weeds generated in my own garden, but those which try to colonise it by spreading from neighbouring gardens really annoy me. Tradescantia growing in profusion along their boundaries invades us through the fence, ladder fern pokes through and tries to take root, while honeysuckle and jasmine send runners along the fence-line in an effort to strangle my sweet peas and runner beans, at the same time making a take-over bid for the garden shed. Buttercups from a garden left to go wild while the owners renovated the house encroach on the lawn, and ivy pops up in the hedge.



Carol Phillips' garden

Worse even than weeds are diseases and predatory insects. Powdery mildew attacks the courgettes (despite the seed packet promising resistance), the silverbeet, and this year, even the runner beans. I've given up growing broad beans in an effort to restrain it, but it simply finds another host. And whitefly: clouds of the little blighters settle on my blackberry and anywhere else they can colonise. I make up a spray of cooking oil and dish washing liquid which is effective in controlling them, but conquer them in one place and they simply pop up in another. I blame the neighbours for exporting these too. Just now I'm doing battle with cabbage white butterflies; their capacity for locating brassicas is truly astonishing. I accidentally left the cover of my cold frame open a crack and couldn't believe that they found my tiny cabbage, broccoli, kohlrabi and kale seedlings. I managed to rescue my plants and they are now thriving under a cloche, but still sporting some ragged leaves to remind me of my carelessness.

I love having birds in the garden and encourage them by putting out sugar water, seeds and fruit. They are supposed to repay me by keeping down insects I don't want, but actually repay me by digging up any un-netted seedlings, pillaging my blackberry bushes, pecking my tomatoes, and transferring the mulch to places where it shouldn't be. And do you know how much they poo? Mostly down my windows and sheets on the line.

Continued on Page 7

GARDENING

Continued from Page 6

I've gone off cats too since they started mistaking my raised vegetable beds for litter trays. I net the beds when they're empty, and plant sticks around small plants to deter them until the plants are big enough to fend for themselves. I've learned the hard way that the sticks are not only hazardous to cats! Maybe I should add masochistic tendencies to the list of attributes needed by a gardener.

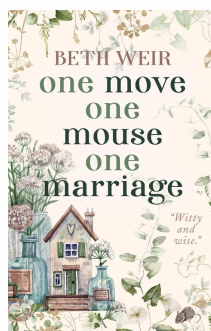
But surely, I hear you say, there must be some rewards? The cucumbers are definitely crunchier, the tomatoes tastier, and I don't mind if the broccoli flowers are more open and the cabbage heads not quite as tight as the supermarket variety, while the occasional slug or snail reminds me that no nasty chemicals have been used. But more than that, I like the garden just being there: the shade under the trees, the red of the crab apples, the tones of green in the grasses, flax and leaves, the patterns of sunlight on the fronds of the tree ferns. It's a soothing haven from the rest of the world, a calming influence, a place to just be. And despite my complaints, I actually enjoy weeding: the sense of being close to the earth, the smell of turned soil, the pleasure of providing a place for things to grow, accepting that I cannot control nature and that the birds, caterpillars, slugs and snails are as entitled to the riches of the garden as I am.

I dream of living in a restored villa surrounded by a large garden with expansive lawns and flowerbeds, mature trees, an overflowing vegetable garden, an orchard and chicken run, and imagine myself sitting in the sun on the return veranda, relaxing and contemplating the results of my labour – but then I spot a weed . . . !



Carol Phillips has been a member of U3A Manawatū for many years and was Chairperson from 2015 to 2018. As well as running several groups including Book Group 1 and Write Your Memoirs, she wrote the book 'U3A Manawatū: the first 20 years' which was published in time for our 20th Anniversary. (A handful of copies remain. You can buy a copy from the Heritage desk in the PN City Library.)

One Move, One Mouse, One Marriage



Beth Weir, an earlier U3A Manawatū member, has a debut novel coming out this year: "One Move, One Mouse, One Marriage".

"With a blend of warmth, wit, and insight, Weir paints a vivid portrait of midlife transformation and delivers a poignant, wryly humorous exploration of identity, long-term love, and the the fragile art of reinvention. (***Taken from the book description on Amazon's website***)

This book will be available in printed form around March but you can obtain a digital version through Amazon. If you pre-order it at the "teaser" price (NZD1.73) it will be downloaded onto your kindle on 14th February. The link is: ingeniumbooks.com/ONEMO.

Beth will be giving a talk at the PN Public Library, probably in July. We plan to have more details about the book and the talk in the May newsletter.

Each Season

by Corey Taylor (Bookseller at Bruce McKenzie Books)

Spring leaps ahead
On stretchy legs,
Amphibiously
Green and wet.

Summer comes
And bumblebees
Puff and dust
Like tumbleweed.

Autumn falls
To rusty knees
Like squeaky doors
As yellow leaves.

Then shivers –
Light as mice tickling –
Creep down my spine
Like ice trickling.

"Mind Games"

Acrostic

/ə'krɒstɪk/

noun: acrostic; plural noun: acrostics

A poem, word puzzle, or other composition in which certain letters in each line form a word or words.

Late 16th century: from French acrostiche, from Greek akrostikhis, from akron 'end' + stikhos 'row, line of verse'. The change in the ending was due to association with -ic.

A double acrostic claimed to have been written by Queen Victoria for the royal children in 1856:

A city in Italy

A river in Germany

A town in the United States

A town in North America

A town in Holland

The Turkish name for Constantinople

A town in Bothnia

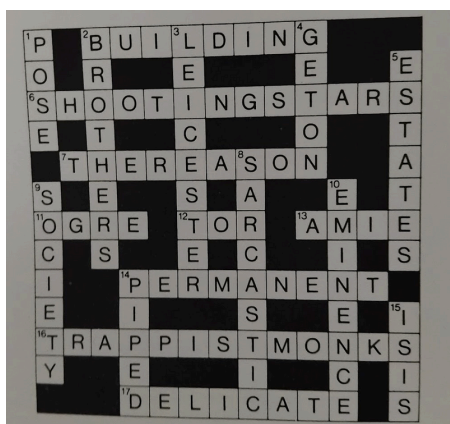
A city in Greece

A circle on the globe

The initials in the solution form the name of a town in England and the final letters (read upwards) what that town is famous for.

Solution in the next newsletter

**Solution to the "Investment" CROSSWORD
(in the November 2025 newsletter)**



Tip from one of our members:

To play free online games (e.g., sudoku, solitaire) without advertisements interrupting you, turn off your device's internet/Wi-Fi (airplane mode) for offline play.

ColorADD

ColorADD is a labelling system for colour-blind people in which black and white symbols represent colours. It was devised by the Portuguese graphic designer Miguel Neiva, and has achieved success in Portugal, where you find the symbols on stationery, clothes and maps. ColorADD is still in use and active as of 2024–2026. It continues to be used as a universal, and inclusive, non-discriminative language that enables colorblind people to identify colors.

Here are four ColorADD symbols with the colours they represent.



orange



green



dark blue



gold

a) Draw the symbols for red, yellow and brown.

b) The four colours below are dark purple, pink, silver and white. Match the colours to the symbols.



c) What are the two possible symbols for grey?

Solutions in the next newsletter

A linguistics definition from Stuart Birks

Semicolonoscopy:
an investigation into the semicolon



FOUR CLASSES OF MEN An Arabic proverb

He who knows not, and knows not he knows not –
shun him for he is a fool
He who knows not, and knows he knows not –
teach him for he is simple
He who knows, and knows not he knows –
wake him up for he is asleep
He who knows and knows he knows –
follow him for he is wise.

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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