

# Jacaranda Journal

NEWSLETTER 1 2020

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE (U3A) PRETORIA

Email:  
info@u3apretoria.org.za

Website:  
[http://www.u3a.org.za/U3A\\_PTA/PTA.htm](http://www.u3a.org.za/U3A_PTA/PTA.htm)

General meetings take place four times a year, 09:00 for 10:00, at NG Kerk Skuilkrans, cnr Cussonia Ave and Jan Alberts St, Val de Grace. GPS S25°44.580 E028°17.494.

Please adhere to the one-way flow of traffic around the church, essential for our safety!

The dates of the quarterly meetings for the 2020 are 27 February (AGM), 28 May, 30 July and 29 October.

The 2020 annual subscription is R100. Guests are welcome at a cost of R30 per event.

Payments can be made at quarterly meetings, or online (there is an application form on the website).

Banking Details:  
Bank: NEDBANK  
Branch: HATFIELD  
Code: 160245  
Acc. Name: U3A PRETORIA  
Acc. No: 1602376972

A full list of courses and interest groups will be issued in February with an update in July.

One-day outings take place on a regular basis and longer excursions are also arranged.

You are encouraged to wear a name tag at every U3A event.

Contributions to the letter are most welcome. Please email U3A, subject: Editorial Team. A short English synopsis is requested if another (official SA) language is used.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

2020 not only marks the start of a new decade but also celebrates the 20th anniversary of U3A in South Africa.

Two remarkable pioneers, Arthur and Sylvia Schrire, attended U3A group meetings when visiting family in Sydney and London in the late 1990s, and on a flight home decided to establish the first South African chapter in Cape Town. Arthur passed away some years ago but Sylvia remains an inspirational member of the committee, also instrumental in founding the first township branch in Gugulethu. She is described as 'a lady of great determination, warmth, diplomacy and energy' who 'with her broad signature smile maintains that you are as old as you feel'. She remains the figurehead of U3A, much loved and respected by friends and colleagues.



If you have the time to google U3A Cape Town – there are now also local branches in the Atlantic Seaboard, Blaauwberg, False Bay, Athlone, Hermanus, Tygerberg and Helderberg – you will be astounded by the range of activities organised by so many enthusiastic volunteer members. It is extraordinary to realise that the vision of just two people has grown in twenty years to an organisation with over thirty branches in South Africa.

U3A Pretoria was established in February 2002 so we still have two years to reach Cape Town's double-decade milestone, but our branch continues to flourish with a wide range of courses, interest groups and excursions to keep everyone physically, socially and mentally active. Although the activities are designed firstly for the benefit of our members, we are offering opportunities for individuals to participate in a community conscience programme to assist less privileged members of society in whatever way may be appropriate within the U3A constitution. Details of possible projects for 2020 will be found on page 5 of this Jacaranda Journal.

Please enjoy every moment of your 2020 membership. Remember that we need every member to assume the role of a Chief as well as an Indian if our wonderful organisation is to continue to expand its activities in Pretoria!

Gill Udai

And if you have ever wondered what you can do about a looming issue – Climate Change – please read Jean Richter's thoughtful exposition on the Jottings pages.

## TALK: 27 FEBRUARY 2020

### SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS OF OUR TIME

Speaker: Dr Felicity Horne

Our generation has lived through profound changes in the physical and social environment over the last 75-odd years. As we enter the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), Dr Felicity Horne considers some of the ways in which political, industrial and technological developments have transformed our world.

## TALK BY GÉRARD LABUSCHAGNE: OCTOBER 2019



We were privileged to be addressed by Dr Labuschagne who is *inter alia* 'a Director of [L&S Threat Management](#), South Africa's first sole-purpose threat assessment and management company focusing on workplace violence' (<http://forensic-psychologist.co.za/>). He provided the summary below.

"Gérard spoke about his journey to becoming a psychologist (beginning with his self-proclaimed dismal performance in Matric in 1989) and his subsequent career as a psychologist over the past 21 years. His career began as an intern clinical psychologist at 1 Military Hospital in 1997, a place he had vowed never to return to after serving his national service there in 1990 before going on to his studies. After completing his internship he moved on to Weskoppies Hospital in Pretoria where he worked for three and a half years as a consultant clinical psychologist. During this time he furthered his interest in the forensic field by completing his PhD in Psychology, with the topic of serial murder, and performing court ordered forensic assessments.

"In 2001 he applied for the position as the head of the Investigative Psychology Section in the SAPS. This Section is responsible for assisting the police investigate psychologically motivated crimes such as serial murders, serial rapes, muti murders, and other unusual violent crimes. During this time he worked on over 110 murder series, and other high profile cases like the Leigh Matthews kidnap and murder, and the Oscar Pistorius case. He also spoke of other cases he worked in that had an impact on him, and the stressors of that line of work. He ended off discussing where the Section is now in terms of its development since leaving the SAPS, and his current focus since 2016: on assessing threats towards employees in organisations and preventing harm from taking place."

## MESSAGE FROM THE COURSE & INTEREST GROUP CO-ORDINATOR

You will receive the course list for 2020 before the end of the month. Looking back over 2019, I counted 41 courses offered last year. And all these were thanks to the generosity of 22 members! We celebrated them and the Interest group co-ordinators with a very happy, sociable and delicious breakfast at The Blue Crane restaurant in November.



### Pictures: Yvonne Shapiro

In previous years there has been a gap between November and March, as regards courses – the Interest groups started in February, except for the Photographic Interest Group (PIG), which had a January meeting. This year three different courses were offered in January and early February. We hope there will be more of those next year as January and February are open for use.

The Walking group offers gentle walks with a sociable tea afterwards, but some members would like more demanding walks or hikes. Through a U3A member we have found such a group which is not part of U3A but we are happy to give contact details for those who look for hikes rather than walks. Fifty-two hikes are lined up for all the Tuesday mornings of the year. Within the larger group is a smaller group which calls itself The Stumblers, a very evocative name. Their hikes vary from easy to more demanding, and several are repeated over the year. The person to contact is Desiré Kantor at 073-817 2317 or [desstan2@gmail.com](mailto:desstan2@gmail.com).

We still wonder if there would be interest in a Garden Club. Perhaps it could have seasonal meetings with a speaker at one, a visit to a nursery at another, a visit to a garden at another etc. There will be a list at the meeting to see if this is a feasible idea.

I'm always on the lookout for new presenters and would appreciate suggestions from people who have not yet come forward to offer courses. Don't be shy! Start with a one session course and discover how both you and the group who attend it enjoy and gain from the experience. As always, my contact details are email: [davenjen@mweb.co.za](mailto:davenjen@mweb.co.za), 012-460 8270 or 082-923 7982.

Jenny Janisch

## FORTHCOMING EXCURSIONS

At a recent committee meeting it was decided that the bus fare would remain unchanged at R150 for all 2020 excursions, and that our finances were in a sufficiently sound state to enable us to subsidise smaller group outings.

The programme for the first part of the year includes a visit to the Joburg Ballet to see their Don Quixote on 18 March.

We will also be watching the progress of the Black Eagles in the Walter Sisulu Gardens so we can – hopefully - view the newest chick on the nest in July or August.

Last year a number of members expressed interest in a Sunday visit to the Lipizzaner horses in Midrand so we will offer this outing again if enough members would like to go.

Lists for these and other possible excursions will be on display at the AGM and details will also be sent by email. Please don't hesitate to contact Gill Udal with suggestions for future U3A outings.

Gill Udal

"Do you see over yonder, friend Sancho, thirty or forty hulking giants? I intend to do battle with them and slay them."

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote



## SAKABULA TOURS 2020

Our tours are conducted in smaller vehicles, not large coaches, and the actual cost depends on the number of participants. **Please let me know as soon as possible if you are interested in a tour (or tours) at 082 568-7610 or [anne@sakabula.com](mailto:anne@sakabula.com) and I will send you the full itinerary.**

Once I have an expression of interest, I'll work out the cost and advise you. I need final numbers six weeks before the due departure date, in order to send the invoices in plenty of time.

To keep the costs down I have booked self-catering accommodation as far as possible but am happy to prepare the food. Details to be discussed when each group is finalised.

**GROOT MARICO: 24 – 26 MARCH**

This short mid-week tour includes readings of Herman Charles Bosman, mampoer tasting and local visits.

**VAAL & DOME: 21 – 24 APRIL**

Spend three nights in rustic accommodation right on the banks of the Vaal River. We visit Potchefstroom, Parys and the Vredefort Dome during our stay.

**MUSIC & MOUNTAINS: 04 – 08 MAY**

This five-day tour is timed to be able to enjoy the autumn leaves on our journey. The highlights are the 4x4 drive up the Sani Pass, the concert by the Drakensberg Boys Choir, the Golden Gate scenery and the Pierneef murals and church windows in Ficksburg.

**GREAT KAROO: 09 – 15 JUNE**

Discover some of the delights of the Great Karoo including the charmingly restored Karoo houses in Cradock, the Walter Battiss Museum in Somerset East, Graaff Reinet with its historic houses and the Valley of Desolation. A visit to Nieu Bethesda is included as is Philippolis before returning to Pretoria.

**NORTHERN DELIGHTS: 06 – 14 JULY**

Discover the far North of our country. Highlights are the visit to Mapungubwe, a two-night stay in Punda Maria, then Shingwedzi and the magnificent Blyde River Canyon.

**DIAMONDS, DUNES & DAISIES: 17 – 26 AUGUST**

Namaqualand, hopefully at the best time for the wild flowers. Other highlights are the Robert Moffat Museum in Kuruman, the mission station of Pella not far from Pofadder, the Augrabies Falls and the visit to Kimberley on the way home.

**AZALEAS: 21 – 24 SEPTEMBER**

We spend three nights in Haenertsburg with time to see the best displays of Azaleas and explore the surrounding areas.

Anne Lawrance

## REPEAT VREDEFORT DOME LONG WEEKEND

**Thursday:** Pick-up at home. Savannah Game Reserve near Parys for picnic lunch and game drive. Tour base: the farm Deelfontein <http://www.deelfontein.co.za/> near Vredefort for a gentle walk to see the sheep and goats come in.

**Friday:** Full-day tour of the Dome area (about a 100-km drive to about 12 sites) with Jan Fourie of Dome Impact Tours <http://www.domeimpacttours.co.za/> taking in the fascinating geological features of the area. Lunch (own account) at the historical Old Imperial Inn, Venterskroon.

**Saturday:** Otters Haunt <http://www.otters.co.za/index.php/vredefort-dome/>, home base of Prof Graeme Addison for full-day historical tour, visiting various Battlefields sites. Lunch (own account) possibly at the Dog and Fig Brewery nearby. Early supper at Deelfontein before a presentation by an expert astronomer, followed by stargazing from the telescope enclosure on the farm.

**Sunday:** Parys for a morning of personal sightseeing (on foot), antique shopping etc. Map and ideas provided. Lunch at O's restaurant on the banks of the Vaal <http://www.osrestaurant.co.za/> – the river is very beautiful there. Drive back to Pretoria where hopefully all will be dropped off before 5 pm.

The TOUR DATES (probably in July) will be chosen to minimise light from the moon, and the risk of rain, but a cloudless sky cannot be guaranteed!

ACCOMMODATION AND CATERING: Please take special note of the information on <https://www.deelfontein.co.za/akkommodasie%20e.htm>. On the left click for instance on Oom Kosie's Farm House, the house where the main kitchen, lounge and diningroom are situated. There is no singles supplement at Deelfontein.

Gerhard Benade, owner of Deelfontein and man of many talents, will provide us with simple but delicious breakfasts and dinners.

PRICING will depend on numbers and the size of the vehicle. We travel together in one vehicle with room for the local guide. There is the potential for individual cars to get lost along the country roads and there is mostly no phone reception.

Eighteen members have already indicated their interest. **If you would like to join the tour please email me at [hilarie0001@gmail.com](mailto:hilarie0001@gmail.com).**

A meeting of participants will be held soon to answer any of your questions – bookings will have to be made as soon as possible as the various stake-holders are popular and have strict deadlines (as we learnt last year!).

Hilarie Riphagen

## BOOK AND AUDIO CD EXCHANGE



Do you have a good book that you've really enjoyed reading and would like to share with other U3A members? Bring it along to the next meeting and put it onto the table provided for this purpose. Write your name and contact number inside if you would like it returned to you. You are welcome to take home any other book contributed by members to our new U3A Book Exchange. Please note that this is a reading group and not a venue to dispose of your unwanted book collection!

Many of us may have CDs which we've listened to over the years and would like to enjoy a different selection of music. Please bring these to the quarterly meetings and place them on the table with the book exchange. If you would like your CD returned to you please mark the case with your contact details.

Gill Udal

## DVD LIBRARY

We have made one new purchase since the end of last year, the complete Poldark series which some of you might have followed on DStv, or maybe you read the books by Winston Graham on which the series is based. Set in Cornwall, the series follows the ups and downs of Captain Ross Poldark's life after his return from the American War of Independence in 1783.

John Lambert

## UBUNTU

For those of you brave enough to have downloaded Facebook on to a personal device you may have seen posts from the group [#ImStaying](#) (no apostrophe!).

This group was formed by Jarette Petzer in September 2019 with the aim of encouraging a more positive mindset among South Africans, particularly those who were ready to pack for Perth. The Zoroastrian philosophy: Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds characterises the movement, which within three months had a membership of a million members. It is still growing rapidly and has attracted international attention. Through daily posts ordinary South Africans from vastly different backgrounds are able to speak to each other and to share their stories, expressing good thoughts and good words in the spirit of Ubuntu.

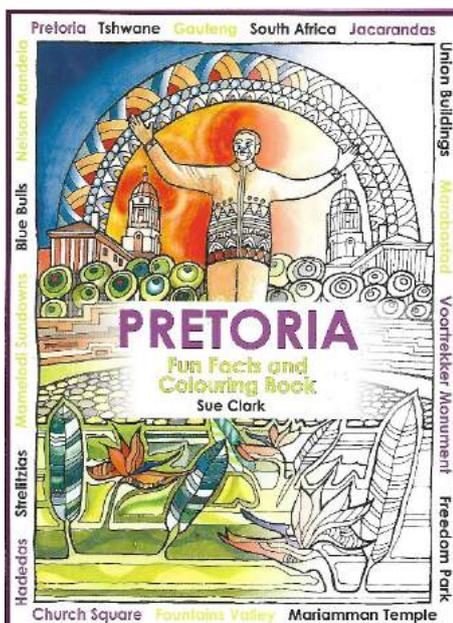


Something even more remarkable has emerged from this movement however: the desire of many people to share good *deeds*. Individuals in the group challenge other members – all strangers to each other – to change the lives of less privileged South Africans. An example of this was the January ‘lay-by’ challenge which invited those members who could afford to do so to anonymously pay the balance of school uniform lay-bys at Pep Stores and similar retail outlets. Photographs were posted of poverty-stricken families arriving to collect their children’s school requirements following phone calls from the stores concerned to tell them that their lay-bys had been settled by strangers. The emotions shown by many single mothers to these gestures of kindness inspired hundreds of other #ImStaying members to do the same. Other members donated stationery to schools to be given to children who could not buy these supplies.

While we are not suggesting that any U3A member joins this Facebook movement we would like to share information about one of their proposed projects with you. So many of us have too much clutter in our homes, often eventually donated to jumble sales. A group of volunteers has identified a different use for these unwanted items: they are collected throughout the year and then offered to selected children from needy communities to give to their parents as Christmas presents. This is often the first such opportunity for the children to make a loving family gesture. They are encouraged to choose their gifts, to wrap them and to write their own cards.

In a similar move good unwanted clothing is collected and donated to ‘pop-up’ neighbourhood clothing depots for the homeless. Please bear these projects in mind next time you are tempted to throw away some item that might bring great joy and pride or offer dignity to another person in Pretoria. We still have to identify and liaise with any local organisers who will possibly be able to collect items donated by U3A members, but thought you might like to know now of these wonderful community initiatives. Watch this space!

Gill Udal



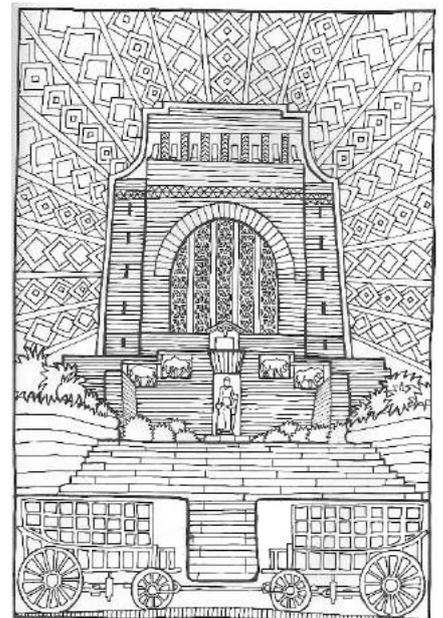
## PRETORIA COLOURING BOOK

Richard Clark’s daughter, Sue, has produced a wonderful ‘Fun Facts and Colouring Book’ about Pretoria. She has generously offered to donate a number of copies to U3A for sale at R70 each, the proceeds to go to a beneficiary of the committee’s choosing. This is a win-win situation.

Sue initially made the book for her son to take to his overseas exchange family to give them some idea of where he lives. So there is a lot of interesting information to go with each colouring-in page.

Copies will be available at the February meeting, on a first come, first served basis.

Jenny Janisch



# Jacaranda Jottings...

## CLIMATE CHANGE: ARE WE DESTROYING OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE?



According to the UN, Climate Change is the defining issue of our time and we are at a defining moment. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be extremely difficult and hardly affordable.

Every day we see evidence of climate change around us, in the high temperatures we are experiencing and in reports of drought and flooding elsewhere. However, we may not be aware of how human civilization is destroying the habitability of Earth.

Climate change is the difference in the Earth's global climate or in regional climates over time. The major factor **causing** the current **climate change** is the emission of **greenhouse gases** (CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and others) – as the result of burning fossil fuels (**coal, oil and gas**). This has resulted in the unprecedented **rise in global temperatures**, the **melting of the polar ice** and the permafrost, uncontrollable **fires, droughts and floods**. Complicating these issues are the **acidifying of the oceans**, plastic and other **pollution** on land and in the sea, land use **changes** and habitat loss, **biodiversity loss** (species extinction), **population** growth, large scale **commercial agriculture** and others. These factors are all **interconnected and interdependent** and escalation of any one can lead to a series of **tipping points** that will be catastrophic. (Well explained in the book “End Game: Tipping Point for Planet Earth” by Barnovsky and Hadley).

Greenhouse gases occur naturally, but after more than a century and a half of industrialization, deforestation, and large-scale agriculture, quantities of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have risen to record levels not seen in three million years. As populations, economies and standards of living grow, so does the cumulative level of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (<https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/climate-change/>).

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Before the industrial revolution the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> was 285 parts per million, now it is around 410 ppm; while to be safe would be 360 ppm. This will stay high for a long time to come even if we stop the emissions now. The CO<sub>2</sub> chemistry is explained here: <https://theconversation.com/climate-explained-why-carbon-dioxide-has-such-outsized-influence-on-earths-climate-123064>.

More than 13,324 scientists from 156 countries have signed an article that warns of a “Climate Emergency”. The article states “scientists have a moral obligation to clearly warn humanity of any catastrophic threat. . . . The climate crisis has arrived and is accelerating faster than many scientists expected. It is more severe than anticipated, threatening natural ecosystems and the fate of humanity”. See <https://scientistswarning.forestry.oregonstate.edu/>.

### How bad can it be in South Africa?

It is predicted that Africa will heat up at twice the global average increase, but a recent survey has found a shocking level of ignorance in South Africa about climate change — 59% of people surveyed had not heard of climate crisis at all, even though 35% reported that climate conditions for agricultural production had got worse (<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-09-17-south-africas-survival-guide-to-climate-change-buy-borrow-or-steal-it/>).

Watch this fun and enlightening video clip (7 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKq9itUVQ8&feature=youtu.be>.

### What can we do about it?

Individual action on climate change can include personal choices in many areas, such as diet, means of long- and short-distance travel, household energy use, consumption of goods and services. Individuals can also engage in local and political advocacy around issues of climate change ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individual\\_action\\_on\\_climate\\_change](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individual_action_on_climate_change)).

### Top eight things you can do about climate change

1. Unite for bold climate action. Join organisations like 350.org, Extinction Rebellion, Greenpeace Africa, Earthlife Africa, African Reality Project. It's vital to put serious pressure on politicians and multinational corporations.
2. Use energy wisely — with Eskom in crisis this will save you money too!
3. Get charged up with renewables – install solar water heaters, solar panels.
4. Eat for a climate-stable planet. Eat more plant-based food. Eating less meat, especially beef and lamb, reduces emissions. It will also be good for health.
5. Start a climate conversation. Engage in local and political advocacy around issues of climate change.
6. Green your commute. Use public transport, share lifts and walk or cycle where possible.
7. Consume less, waste less, enjoy life more.
8. Invest in renewables and divest from fossil fuels. Find out where the companies you invest with are investing your money and put pressure on them invest in renewable energy.

Find out more at <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20181102-what-can-i-do-about-climate-change>.

Read, listen, ask, watch, think! Beware of fake and denialist news. Reliable sources are: The Guardian, Daily Maverick, Mail & Guardian; IPCC reports, World Scientists Warnings, UN reports.

"Those of us who happen to be alive today are determining the future of humanity. We have to be serious about our responsibility. Individual actions reinforce and support politicians in making the bold choices necessary to tackle the problem on the scale that's needed. We've got to act fast." Dr Kimberly Nicholas, Sweden.

And lastly, some words of wisdom spotted in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens:



Jean Richter with Otti Nesper