

Jacaranda Journal

NEWSLETTER 3 2018

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE (U3A) PRETORIA

Email Address:
u3apretoria@gmail.com

Website:
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, absolutely essential for our safety!

The dates of the quarterly meetings for the rest of 2018 are 26 July and 25 October.

The 2018 annual subscription is R100 (R50 for people joining from July on). 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

An updated list of courses and interest groups will be issued 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.

When I look at the list of courses and interest groups presented by our U3A I am struck by two things: firstly, the wide range of activities aimed at promoting intellectual stimulation, physical activity and social interaction for our members. And, secondly, although we have 431 registered members, the names of only 23 people willing to offer courses or coordinate interest groups appear on the list. So this is a request to everyone: please consider what you can do for U3A.

Do you have suggestions for inexpensive group activities for our members with limited incomes? For example, the Pretoria National Botanical Garden is free to pensioners on Tuesdays. How about meeting for gentle walks to observe the changing seasons and bird life, followed by picnic lunches? Would you like to bring a sketch book? A camera? A good book you've just read to share with another member?

I am asking you all to put on your thinking caps and to suggest ways of enriching the lives of your fellow U3A-ers. There are nearly 30 other branches in South Africa – why not Google some of them for inspiration? The committee will be very happy to assist you to put your ideas into practice.

Thank you very much. I look forward to receiving a flood of emails from members who would like to offer their skills to U3A Pretoria!

Gill Udal



UPCOMING TALK 26 JULY 2018

The Privilege of a Career in Scientific Research

Speaker: **Richard Clark**

Richard Clark will be talking about what is science, and what is not, and will spend time on interesting facets of the research he did in the field of biological chemistry.

SYNOPSIS: 31 MAY 2018 TALK

Rae Labuschagne's talk, '100 and Not Out', looked at a remarkable group of people: centenarians. They are receiving a great deal of attention as they provide us with a picture of aging's potential. They teach us that a long life can be a healthy and enjoyable life, a life with friends and family close by, a life of satisfaction. Factors which are vital to living well to great ages were looked at, as well as examples of centenarians who continue to live satisfying lives.

Rae trained as an occupational therapist and chose to work in the field of geriatrics. She was a lecturer at the College of Occupational Therapy and later worked in geriatric units in South Africa. She went on to receive an MSc (Gerontology) degree from the University of Southern California and on returning from the USA worked as a gerontologist. She is particularly interested in ethical care of the aged and has contributed to several textbooks on aging and Occupational Therapy.

Rae Labuschagne

Read on for a postscript to the talk (over), as well as more on its content on the Jottings page.

POSTSCRIPT TO RAE LABUSCHAGNE'S TALK



Left to right: John, Pamela and Gerda Rautenbach

Gill Udal

We were privileged to have with us Pamela Kustner's father, John Hilton, who celebrates his 100 birthday this year. Pam spoke about her father and his remarkable achievements (he ticked all the boxes for successful aging), and then we sang happy birthday and presented him with a cake.

We were delighted when he made a short speech and wish him many more years of health and happiness.

Rae Labuschagne

Afterwards, John sent an email to U3A Pretoria:

What a joy for me it was to be at your recent Meeting and to hear such an erudite and well-spoken lady talking about Old Age of which I, most certainly, am within its grips!

Pamela has given me a note on the Key Points for Ageing Well to which I, most certainly, will try to live!

It was so kind of you all to present me with the Birthday Cake which I found delicious! Please thank Gerda for her efforts in making it!

To you all, I send my affection,

John Hilton

We echo Gill's words: We were delighted that you could be with us (and) wish you a wonderful celebration in the UK and an equally happy birthday in November.

MESSAGE FROM THE COURSE & INTEREST GROUP CO-ORDINATOR

It's always exciting to get a new group going and we hope this one will be of interest to many people: There is the possibility of a new Interest Group on Economic Matters, depending on the response from members. The idea came about during a teatime discussion after a Music Interest Group meeting. This would not be aimed at advice on investments but on subjects such as the phenomenon of crypto currencies, the history of capitalism/socialism/communism and its legacies, the exponential growth of wealth and poverty and the effects thereof, and more. The idea is to invite speakers to talk to the group, perhaps once a month or once a quarter. Lists will be available at the July meeting for those interested to sign up.

In complete contrast, a member has offered Circle Dancing but is overseas at the moment so more information about that will come later. A few new members have offered to run courses but they are not ready to present them yet. We look forward to them joining the dedicated group of people who offer so much of interest to all.

Please contact Jenny at davenjen@mweb.co.za or 082 923 7982 to discuss any ideas for new courses or interest groups.

We are concerned about the number of people who sign up for a course and then don't arrive, not telling the course leader that they will not be attending. Sometimes, people do let the leader know but leave it too late for their place to be filled by someone else on the list. Please have the courtesy to make sure you have informed the course leader in good time if you are going to be unable to attend the course. Of course, ill health is not something one can predict so we are not talking about that situation.

Jenny Janisch

PARAPROSDOKIANS

These are figures of speech in which the latter part of the sentence makes you stop and think again.
(Churchill loved them.)

We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.

A clear conscience is usually the sign of a fuzzy memory.

War does not determine who is right, only who is left.

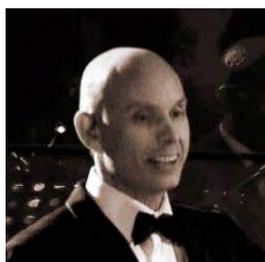
A bank is a place that will lend you money, if you can prove that you don't need it.

Hospitality: making your guests feel like they're at home, even if you wish they were.

I'm supposed to respect my elders but it's getting harder and harder for me to find one.

AN INTEREST GROUP IN ACTION

Gerben Grooten enlightens and entertains



Attendees at U3A Pretoria's Music Group's event of 14 February were again treated to a most absorbing discussion. More than 20 members attended the talk by Gerben Grooten, who highlighted the constructive role music can play in the life of communities, such as those in South Africa, where the community members often have such diverse backgrounds.

Born and bred in the Netherlands, Gerben came to South Africa in 2004 with a distinguished academic and professional record. He is the principal conductor of the Pretoria Symphony Orchestra and is also involved in a wide variety of lecturing, orchestral and choral activities in and around Pretoria, where he now lives permanently. You can read more about his interesting life by Googling him or visiting his Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/>.



A memorable point made during his talk was the strong unifying effect of making music when people do it together, playing their instruments or singing in unison with the common goal of producing a pleasing outcome. Differences between participants fade away as all experience how rewarding their joint effort becomes.

Also, a feature of art, and music in particular, is the powerful way in which it can reflect the reality within which artists find themselves. We in South Africa thus have a unique opportunity to give to the world something that no one else can.

Hats off to Mia Rich for maintaining the excellent quality of the activities of this interest group.

Arno Webb (group photograph: Ray Spencer)

AN EXCURSION NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN

When Jupiter was particularly prominent in our skies during 2009, an afternoon outing was planned to attend a lecture by a distinguished professor at the Wits Planetarium. As a sociable meal is always an integral part of excursions we decided to combine a morning visit to the Mint with lunch at the adjacent Burgundy's Restaurant in Midrand on the way to Johannesburg. To ensure that we were not late for the Planetarium, orders were placed in advance before everyone went to ogle the displays of gold jewellery in the Coin World shop. (We had hoped for a tour of the Mint but obviously did not look a trustworthy bunch so were limited to looking only at items behind bullet-proof glass.)

We emerged from the Mint ravenous – eyes satiated but stomachs still anticipating a mountain of toasted sandwiches. But disaster! The two cooks entrusted with our lunch order were being entertained by a couple of male admirers and had not even started to butter the bread. With time running out before our appointment at the Planetarium, U3A sprang into action.

The ladies took over the kitchen while the men manned the pub, handing over beers at a pace worthy of any professional bartender (Ken Brown was responsible for quality control).

Lunches, both liquid and solid were served and consumed at record speed, and in less than an hour we'd estimated the bill, (no service charge added), emptied assorted coins on to the counter and staggered back on to the bus to arrive exactly on time at the Planetarium.

This, however, is not the end of the story. As we settled back into our comfortable seats, tilted backwards to observe the glories of Jupiter and the night sky, some strange malaise - possibly related to the efficiency of the bar service - overcame the entire group, and the professor delivered her lecture to an auditorium of visibly vibrating sagging jaws. Those of us who had woken up before the end of the lecture had the presence of mind to nudge our neighbours, and so a sort of Mexican Wave of banging knees startled U3A into consciousness and rapturous applause.

An outing remembered, no doubt, by the professor as much as the busload of Pretorians who drove home fully refreshed at the end of the lecture.

Gill Udal

AN EVENING EXCURSION 19 MAY 2018

Hartebeesthoek Satellite Tracking Station and Radio Astronomy Observatory (HartRAO)

This outing was a U3A 'first' in many ways: our first Saturday excursion, our first evening excursion and the first excursion to include friends and family, numbering 38 in all.

Unfortunately, the cloud cover precluded a viewing of the night sky through the radio telescope. We were, however, instructed and entertained for three hours by our charming and knowledgeable guide Tony Dhlamini (Science Communicator at HartRAO), who after matriculating at a poor rural school could not even raise the application-form fee for tertiary study, but whose ability earned him a bursary to study at UP a year later. He has now completed his studies for a PhD in Mathematics so was able to field any questions from the scientists in our group!



Tony Dhlamini addressing the group

The evening started with a 'tour' of the various satellites owned by different countries, and then moved into the computer laboratories where we were shown the hydrogen maser clock, the most accurate time-keeping instrument in the world.



The dish against the early evening sky



Rodney Pistorius with the clock

After a sociable picnic supper, we were invited by Tony (silhouetted below) to play a number of outdoor scientific games, much enjoyed by the men in the group, before returning to Pretoria.



The success of this excursion has prompted U3A to extend certain future excursions to non-U3A members for the payment of a small guest fee.

Gill Udai

UPCOMING EXCURSIONS

Proposed excursions for the next 3 months

I would like to remind you that it is a U3A principle that excursions – offered by very few U3As so they are really the icing on the cake – should not be subsidised by general funds. This principle is followed by all other U3As in South Africa. Consequently, we do not hire a bus unless there are enough participants to make it financially viable. The bus fare for all 2018 excursions is R150 per person, irrespective of distance, as we pay for the driver's time as well as fuel costs. Please do NOT include any entrance fees with your bus payment unless you are specifically requested to do so. The 'guest' fee for the rest of this year will be R30.

19 July: Buddhist Temple tour, Bronkhorstspuit, which includes a talk on Buddhism and a vegetarian lunch. Final details will be sent to all participants.

August: I have had requests for a trip to the beautiful **Aloe Farm near Hartebeespoort Dam** which is at its best during the winter months. We will ask the owners to give us a talk on the way they propagate new species. This may be coupled with another excursion to one of the nearby attractions. Before I set any dates I need to gauge members' interest. Please send a return email with the subject **Aloe** if you are interested and you will be sent further information. This does not represent a firm commitment.

August/September: The Renzo Vignali Sculpture Foundry. I will finalise the date once we know whether we will be going to the Aloe Farm. If both excursions are sufficiently well supported to hire a bus we can plan the aloe farm for early August, and the foundry for mid-September.

Gill Udai

TOURS FOR 2018

Unfortunately, the Vredefort Dome trip had to be cancelled for lack of support in spite of efforts by Anne Lawrance of *Sakabula Safaris & Tours* who took over when Hilarie was unable to run the tour on behalf of the U3A Travel Club. Maybe next year!

Anne's **Great North Tour (18-22 June)**, with two U3A participants, proved a truly worthwhile bushveld break: 'Two old hands at Kruger and one 'virgin' spent a rewarding time in the remote northern part of Kruger Park with good animal sightings (although no cats), lots of birds including the endangered saddle bill stork and ground hornbill. The Blyde River Canyon with its magnificent lichens and views was much appreciated although we were all saddened by the state of Pilgrim's Rest.'



Left to right: Punda Maria entrance; air vent detail, Shingwedzi; view at Crooks Corner (with crocodiles, not visible at this resolution)

Anne Lawrance

Anne Lawrance also has several tours lined up for later this year that are generously discounted for U3A members only:

Diamonds, Dunes & Daisies (Namaqualand and the Wild Flowers), 24 August to 4 September

Mapungubwe and Azaleas, 10-15 September

Genesis (Barberton area), 18-22 October

If you are interested please deal directly with Anne at anne@sakabula.com as soon as possible.



Mia Rich's week at Kruger Park Lodge in September has been taken for this year. Similar opportunities are being discussed in the Travel Club and could be made available here in due course.



You are reminded of Gill's offer to advise and assist any U3A group who would like to follow her proposed routes to Hogsback and Fouriesburg. Note that she is not prepared to make bookings etc. Please write to hilarie0001@gmail.com with subject line 'Hogsback' if you are interested.

Hilarie Riphagen

A WORTHY SOCIAL PROJECT

Plastic Tops and Bread Tags for Wheelchairs

This Tumelong Mission project started in 2015 and has grown tremendously. We began with cooperation from three churches and a school, but now collect regularly from eleven churches, four schools and several social groups. Since we started, we have handed over more than 40 wheelchairs to disabled people, both young and old.

For 450 kg plastic tops or 50 kg bread tags, InterWaste in Germiston gives us a wheelchair. I collect from the eastern parts of Pretoria only; the western areas send their contributions to Tumelong HQ in Pretoria West. I store tops and tags in boxes packed along the wall of our garage, and in spite of the vast amount needed, we get the required 150 000 tops in about 5 weeks! Bread tags take much longer to amass.

How can you help?

By collecting any PLASTIC top that can be screwed off. By finding a depot near you!

The participating churches in the east include St Francis Waterkloof; St Wilfred's Hatfield; Trinity Lynnwood; Corpus Christi Garsfontein; St Anne's Equestria; St Hilda's Gezina; Good Shepherd Eersterust; Willows Methodist Church; as well as three churches in Mamelodi. The schools which help us are Hatfield Christian School, St Mary's DSG, St Alban's and Courtney College. I also meet up with collectors from the Fitness League, Evergreen Retirement Centre, Tshwane Chess during competitions, a yoga group in Johannesburg, and even U3A at the general meetings!

Join us if you can! You may contact me at ecboje@gmail.com if you need to know more.

Elizabeth Bojé



Left: Bernard Sithole, shot in a hijacking
Right: Moses Letsholo, who has lost a leg
Above: What 450 kg stored tops looks like!

(Elizabeth features in the 'wheelchair' photos.)



You are invited to inform us about similar environmental or social projects that you are involved in that we may be unaware of.

DVD LIBRARY

We lend DVDs to members at every general meeting for a deposit of R50 per series, which is refundable only if the DVDs are returned no later than the next such meeting. You are welcome to make suggestions for new DVD series, or to donate / lend any of your own DVDs to our library.

There is one new DVD: 'Civilisations' presented by Simon Schama, Mary Beard and David Olusoga. It 'explores the visual culture of societies from around the globe, revealing alongside the magnificent objects made in the West, the wealth of treasures created by other cultures'.

John Lambert

Jacaranda Jottings...

These days there are more centenarians than ever before. Here are just a few well-known and highly successful examples:



Olivia De Havilland (born 1916): Her most famous role was in *Gone with the Wind*, but she made a total of 49 films and won two Academy awards. In 2017 she was made Dame Commander of the British Empire and is the oldest person to have received this honour.



The Queen Mother (1900-2002): Died at the age of 102. She was beloved especially for the example she set during WWII. She loved gardening, fly fishing, horse racing and partying!



Don Pellman (born 1915): Five-time record holder in his class for track and field events. As he said, he and Jesse Owens had a lot in common! He practised long jump at one stage using the children's sand pit in the local park.



Alice Herz-Sommer (1903-2014): Born in Prague to a prominent Jewish family, she was a successful concert pianist when the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia. She and her young son survived Theresienstadt. She kept alive by playing in the camp orchestra and later moved with her son to Israel. She died recently in London aged 110. She was courageous and always positive.



Madame Jeanne Calment (1875-1997): Officially the world's oldest person. She lived to the age of 122. She came from a long-lived family, claiming she lived so long due to a heavy reliance on chocolate, olive oil, cigarettes, and cheap red wine. Known for her fine sense of humour she is one of the most researched centenarians to date!

Rae Labuschagne

Tom Perls, a leading researcher in the field of aging (see his questionnaire on www.livngto100.com), says there are five vital aspects contributing to longevity:

1. Attitude

The way we cope with stress is very important. Centenarians appear to handle stress well and Jeanne Calment said "If I can't do anything about it, I don't worry".

2. Genetics

Some people hit the jackpot and have the right combination of longevity genes. If you have more than one relative who lived into the 9th decade and beyond, you are likely to have inherited these genes. (This is not a licence to overeat, overdrink, etc!)

3. Exercise

Dr Perls recommends 30 minutes a day while other researchers say 45 minutes three times a week is acceptable. Walking is very good but strength exercises are important as well.

4. Interests

It's vital to challenge oneself with new and complex activities. Neural pathways can be established and cognitive reserves built. Keep old skills alive and develop new ways of doing things.

5. DO NOT SMOKE

Finally, have a sense of purpose in your life. Be involved in social activities and be grateful for the years you have had and those that lie ahead.

OWN YOUR NEWSLETTER!

This newsletter is a work in progress. If you would like to propose a catchy alternative name for the letter, together with a matching title for the last page, we would like to hear from you. You might even win a prize!

Likewise, the emblem displayed in this issue is not cast in stone. Another possibility will appear in the next issue, to be voted on at the end of the year. If you have a creative idea for a different emblem for the newsletter that captures the spirit of U3A, and of our U3A in particular, do send it along. Who knows, it could be the top contender.

