



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 date of the final quarterly meeting of 2018 is 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 early next year.

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.

Jacaranda Journal

NEWSLETTER 4 2018

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As the year draws to a close I would like to thank my exceptional committee, and the course and interest group leaders for their sterling work in 2018. Many of these members have volunteered years of service to U3A Pretoria, which would not be the vibrant organisation it is today without their dedication.

However, we have to face the reality that more than half of our committee are closer in age to 80 than 70 and that if U3A Pretoria is to continue to thrive we need to encourage 'younger' members to steer us into the future. The committee meets four times a year and the various tasks are willingly shared between us all. If you believe you could assist we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please come along to our very special final meeting. We look forward to seeing you there!

Gill Udai

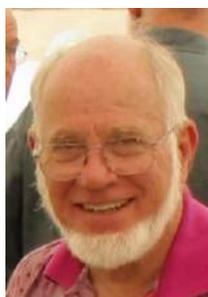


YEAR-END MUSICAL EVENT 25 OCTOBER 2018

A musical programme with a difference, in the church itself

We will be treated to a performance of the University of Pretoria music-student group, the 'HOPE CLARINET QUARTET', with members Ayeku Dayo (Clarinet I), Jan Joubert (Clarinet II), So Jung (Clarinet III) and Edward Mitas (Bass Clarinet).

SYNOPSIS: 26 JULY 2018 TALK



In his talk, '**The Privilege of a Career in Scientific Research**', Richard Clark outlined the essentials of evidence-based (scientific) research and pointed out some important ways that it differs from technology. He also spent time on pseudoscience and its use by media, marketing and other 'alternative' lobbies in misinforming and misleading the public on the subject.

The second part of Richard's lecture covered aspects of his own career in research, from alkaloids in plants, the useful properties of modified gelatine, and some interesting stuff about proteins, including cobra venom, algal poisons, Botox and plant lectins.

Richard Clark

For more from Richard see also the back page Jottings. The content of his presentation is available from U3A on request.

U3A would like to express sincere condolences to Richard on the passing of Lyn on 30 August. She set an example to all of us through her courage and continued participation in U3A activities despite the challenges she faced on a daily basis. We will miss her smiling face at our meetings. Rest in Peace, Lyn.

MESSAGE FROM THE COURSE & INTEREST GROUP COORDINATOR

This year 29 courses were offered on a wide range of topics and activities. Of these 11 were entirely new, although most were offered by previous presenters. Some courses attract large numbers and have to be repeated for as long as the list lasts. The courses given by John Lambert and Verna Brown, both committee members, are always popular. We thank them for their generosity in giving so much of their time. One course was offered in Afrikaans.

The number of interest groups has grown from 11 to 13 with the addition of the Economic Matters and Circle Dancing groups. The History group has the largest number of members – a whopping 60! – and because of space constraints cannot accept new members. However, the coordinator will open a waiting list for those who would like to join and are prepared to wait for a place.

We will end the year with a breakfast for all the course presenters and interest group coordinators on Tuesday, 13 November. Each one is being invited personally so that the committee can celebrate and thank them for their efforts in making U3A Pretoria such a vital and active organisation.

Finally, I appeal to all members to consider giving a course next year, and not necessarily in English. We are always in need of new ideas and personalities to enrich our retirement. Contact me at davenjen@mweb.co.za, 012-460 8270 or 082-923 7982.

Jenny Janisch

AN INTEREST GROUP IN ACTION

CIRCLE DANCING



This new interest group, which I have joined, began recently and has made a lot of people happy. Our teacher, Yvonne Shapiro (centre front in the picture on the left), has been involved with this form of movement for many years and she brings her experience and enthusiasm to our sessions, held twice a month in the Scout Hall in Melk Street.

There is a particular way to form the circle, right palm held up and left palm down, and we usually begin on the right foot.

Before we start each dance, Yvonne names it and tells

us who choreographed it – the dances come from all over the world. She explains the routine carefully, starts the music and off we go. Most of the dances are fairly simple and the pace quite manageable.

There is something both meditative and joyful about circle dancing and we come away from it feeling at peace with the world.

Why not come and try a session to see how you like it? It is an activity of a very different sort from the intellectual nature of many of our courses and interest groups.

Jenny Janisch



Photographs: Yvonne Shapiro and Helga Nordhoff

THIS RECENT COURSE HAD PARTICIPANTS SCRATCHING THEIR HEADS

A PUZZLING AFFAIR - PATTERNS & PUZZLES FOR PLEASURE

Recreational mathematics is a branch of mathematics inspired by ideas hidden in puzzles, games, and other forms of play. It often involves mathematical puzzles and games and, while not limited to something amateurs do, should be amusing and enjoyable.

Mental activities that demand determination, patience and logic were widespread in most historical civilizations and solving puzzles has been a popular pastime for centuries. But with the arrival of television the interest in this leisure activity has declined sharply. This is a pity as solving puzzles has many benefits: research has shown that working on puzzles enhances memory and promotes innovative and creative thought processes.

The Oxford Dictionary defines a puzzle as 'a problem or toy designed to test knowledge, ingenuity or patience'. The puzzles used during this three-session course were designed to do just that. Playing with shapes and numbers proved to be great fun.

Helga Nordhoff



Participant **Ray Spencer** writes: 'I've been privileged to have Helga tickling my remaining grey cells on her 'Puzzling' course. She's had us thinking not only outside, but also under the box, as we've tangled with tangrams, tussled with tessellations, been tried by triangles, perplexed by puzzles and numbered by numbers! The Eureka shout of "HEY! I've done it!" is invariably followed by a chorus of "Show me!"s and a muttered "But don't ask me how!". And, I can now disclose, Helga is actually a closet sadist — the twinkle never leaves her eyes for a moment as she exhorts us to vault yet another obstacle!'



TELEVISION EXPOSURE FOR U3A PRETORIA

The message of a July episode of the latest series of KykNET's 'Met 'n Huppel in die Stap' (a programme for over 50's presented by Riaan Cruywagen) was that **it is never too late to learn a new skill!**

Committee member, Gerda Rautenbach, was one of those interviewed. After a brief look at the beginnings of U3A world-wide and its mission to enhance the lives of seniors through stimulating lectures and courses, Gerda charmed Lieb Bester (middle picture, on the right) and co-interviewer Tinus Rautenbach with a description of the making of Russian Dolls (with smaller ones stacked inside larger ones) and a hands-on demonstration of the art of Origami, two skills which feature amongst the many courses on offer within U3A Pretoria.

Here are some photographs of the television screen during the showing. In the words of Gill Udal: 'Thank you Gerda for representing U3A Pretoria with such confidence and elegance. You are a television natural!' **Hilarie Riphagen**



EXCURSIONS

2018 has been a very busy year in terms of excursions, with trips to the Buddhist Temple, the JPO, Carmen the Ballet, HartRAO, the Sculpture Foundry and the Lascaux Exhibition, as well as a Green/Red bus tour of Johannesburg.

We had hoped to add a visit in November to the BMW plant in Rosslyn but at the time of writing it has not yet reopened to the public.

Any possible end-of-year excursion will be advertised separately by email and at the meeting on 25 October.

We welcome suggestions for outings from members as long as they are not weather-dependent in the summer rainfall months!

Below some pictures from the recent well-attended visit to the Sci-Bono Lascaux Caves Exhibition (and see also <https://za.ambafrance.org/The-Wonders-of-Rock-Art-Lascaux-and-Africa-at-Sci-Bono-Discovery-Centre>):



Gill Udal

SOME PAST EXCURSIONS (AND THEIR MEMORABLE MOMENTS)

ON BEING A RED TRIANGLE...

Escorting a group of U3A members on a bus excursion can be a test of physical fitness and the ability to adapt to extraordinary circumstances. Some years ago we coupled a morning meander round the Montecasino Bird Park with an afternoon visit to the magnificent Russian Orthodox Church in Midrand. Lunch, with the addition of a glass or three of wine for some members, separated the two outings.

We were on our way back to Midrand when our bus broke down on a steep incline just before the Allandale turnoff, which at the time was under construction. The driver pulled off against the concrete barrier, telephoned for a replacement vehicle and then realised he needed to place a warning triangle behind the bus. The triangle was in a compartment under the left side of the bus, which in turn was parked a couple of millimetres from the concrete barrier making access to the compartment impossible. Thus I was requested to stand behind the bus instead, and wave in warning mode at upcoming traffic.

The first obstacle to overcome was the size of the driver's midriff, as the only practical exit from the bus was through his door. For a few embarrassing minutes there was a possibility that for the rest of the afternoon I would remain wedged on his knees between the steering wheel and his belly, but with much indelicate pushing and pulling I eventually found myself free of the bus and positioned as a red triangle on the highway.

And then I became aware that the busy flow of traffic on the N1 had simply disappeared, rather like the scenes of a nuclear catastrophe in a sci-fi movie. Not a single vehicle was in sight on any of the 10 lanes, other than our stationary bus filled with chattering U3A-ers. What was in sight, however, was a large yellow sign that warned motorists of road closures... due to rock blasting at that very spot between 2 and 2.15 pm.... and it was now just after 2 pm. I had a vision of an entire busload of senior citizens ascending into the stratosphere above the Jukskei river, Mary Poppins-like, all still in animated conversation, when a series of blasts shook the air. After the dust from the dynamite subsided I raced back to discover that the level of noise in the vehicle was so loud that no one had been aware that both the bus and the red triangle had nearly met their makers.



Most appropriately, when we eventually entered the Russian Orthodox Church the overhead heavenly angels were holding their hands high to welcome us!

Gill Udal

A TOUR DURING 2018

DIAMONDS, DAISIES & DUNES TOUR 23 AUG – 04 SEPT 2018

WHAT AN EXPERIENCE! From day one we were entertained from morning till night. Anne Lawrance did everything she could to meet all our various wants and needs. My husband and I found all our interests catered for (bird watching, wine tasting, photography, trees, geology ...). Luckily, we were a small group and the other travellers had very similar interests, which did make it easier.

Besides the obviously stunning flowers, mountains and beautiful scenery, we were exposed to wonderful stories Anne told us in the more 'boring' bits of the road. She gave us interesting facts and told amusing stories before we reached each town, giving us an insight into what we would be seeing.

The history of this part of South Africa came alive for me. The various mission stations were fascinating. I had not realised how important they were in the history and growth of our country. We visited interesting museums and places of interest not only in the towns where we stayed but also along the way e.g. the Water Wheels in Keimoes, a row of date palms in Upington, Louis Leipoldt's grave near Clanwilliam, the Englishman's Grave between Clanwilliam and Calvinia, a Corbelled House, etc.

We fitted in two wine tastings – Orange River Cellars and Klaver Winery. A must for any wine lover. Good quality wines at very affordable prices. We stayed in delightful guesthouses, quaint B&Bs and spectacular hotels. We got to try local delicacies – lamb, lamb and more lamb! I thoroughly enjoyed "skaapstertjies", having had them only once before. But the main emphasis was, of course, the amazing flowers of Namaqualand. We visited botanical gardens and nature reserves, stopping many times along the way to take photos of flowers at the side of the road or in nearby fields.

For me the highlights of the tour were:

1. The wonderful Hantam National Botanical Garden where I spent over an hour walking amongst the flowers. Heavenly!!!
2. Wupperthal, a quaint town in the Cederberg mountains, which started as a mission station but is now famous for its "velskoene".
3. Lambert's Bay and Bird Island with its hundreds of Cape Gannets and seals lying lazily on the rocks. Louis and I scored our 540th bird, the Crowned Cormorant, on the roof of a building in the harbour, so definitely memorable for us.
4. The quiver trees that kept popping up all over the place with their amazingly textured bark.

I would recommend this tour for anyone who wants to see what an amazing country we live in.

Glyneth de Jager



Pictures (clockwise from top right): Ready to go, Augrabies National Park, Flowers between Elandsbaai & Velddrif, Corbelled House, Lamberts Bay, Leipoldt Snr house, Vanrhynspas, Wupperthal

Anne Lawrance

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.

John Lambert

SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

HOW SECOND-HAND BOOKS PROVIDE A LIFELINE TO THE AGED

In a time when many people, and particularly public institutions, experience financial problems, a group of volunteers (including members of U3A), are assisting the Princess Christian Home (PCH) for the Aged in Pretoria.

Located in Nieuw Muckleneuk, the PCH is one of the oldest residences for the elderly in the city, dating back to 1904 when the foundation stone for the first PCH building was laid by Princess Christian, a daughter of Queen Victoria.



In 2006 Pat Dennis, one of the PCH Board members (also a member of U3A), volunteered to start a second-hand bookshop to raise funds for PCH.

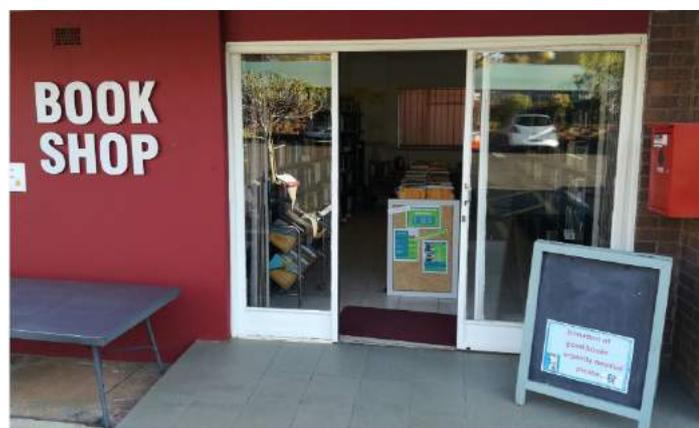
The Bookshop is located on the premises of PCH and is run by a group of 13 volunteers, of which three are current members of U3A.

The U3A members of the group of PCH volunteers (from left to right in the photo) are:

Pat Dennis (Coordinator)

Audrey Klein

Martha Pretorius



The Bookshop relies on donations of books from the public, and is open on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday mornings.

Over the past 12 years, money raised by the sale of books was used to fund the following projects which would not otherwise have been possible: Construction of an ambulance bay, upgrading of the guard house, dining room, bathroom facilities and living units, building of a hairdressing salon and also the provision of new furnishings and linen for use in the Home.

So, the next time that you consider throwing out books, please throw them at the PCH Bookshop, located at 120 Middel Street, Nieuw Muckleneuk, or contact the Home at 012 460 2221 (alternative temporary number 012 803 1513).

For any other enquiries send an email to Pat at marketing@pch24.org.

Please also visit our website at www.pchbookshop.co.za.

Currently we are in the fortunate position that we do not need any more volunteers right now, but this may change at very short notice. May we agree that we can ask for volunteers if and when needed?

Martha Pretorius

Jottings

AUTISM

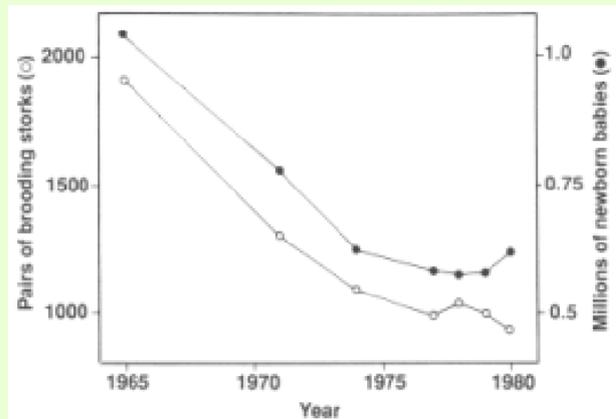
Apropos Richard Clark's lecture on Science and the Value of Evidence, you could have a look at <https://www.historyofvaccines.org/content/articles/do-vaccines-cause-autism>, as well as other related articles on the allegations that vaccines cause autism. There were lawyers even "funding" the research in question, with a view to using the "evidence" to prosecute the vaccine manufacturers. Consequential to this was the plight of many kids who contracted measles and have suffered permanent ill health from dishonesty. The moral of the story is that disbelief is very appropriate on matters where the body of evidence does not support the postulate. There is the case of the genius amongst fools, but this is unusual, the instances in science being rare, e.g. Hubble, who after being scoffed at by his peers, was acknowledged in the manner he deserved. Time, in the end, reveals the truth.

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

There was a question from the floor that became a dialogue, and I did not answer the original enquiry as to why Science does not accept anecdotal evidence. May I clear this up with the following parable.

Some years ago a technical whiz-kid from Telkom hit the street with a magic box that would take your pain away. It was lauded as the greatest thing since the invention of sliced bread, and masses of these devices were sold, testimonies for its efficacy still being given by users today. I gather (but cannot find the reference) that someone purchased a number of these devices, disabled half of them (so that they still looked like they were working) and did a proper clinical trial on a group of patients. The individuals with the dud machines were as happy with the "results" as those who had the unadulterated units. This is what science asks for as evidence. Have a look at <http://www.quackdown.info/article/gervan-lubbe-fraudster-who-promoted-pseudo-science-and-media-believed-him/>. Gervan was sent to chookie. Remember that if you have no independent (scientific) evidence you are relying on trust, and misplaced trust can be your nemesis.

INCONTROVERTIBLE PROOF?



THE CONCLUSION TO RICHARD'S TALK:

Behold the mighty dinosaur,
Famous in prehistoric lore,
Not only for his power and strength
But for his intellectual length.
You will observe by these remains
The creature had two sets of brains –
One in his head (the usual place),
The other at his spinal base,
Thus he could reason A priori
As well as A posteriori.

Poem by Bert Leston Taylor (1866–1921)

Richard Clark

OWN YOUR NEWSLETTER!

At the final meeting of the year you will be asked to cast your vote on which of the emblems heading the Jacaranda Journal this year you find most pleasing and appropriate. Here they are in order of appearance:

