



## **U3A NEWSLETTER NO. 104      November 2021 – January 2022**

Dear U3A Members

Gill Ansell has asked me to take over the writing of the Newsletter. A daunting task as I have to fill rather large boots. My name is Diana van Cittert, I am a relatively new member, Paul and I having joined during Lockdown of last year.

The 2021-2022 Committee is chaired by Helen Batting, Peter Dangerfield is Vice Chairman and is responsible for Front of House (when meetings resume at St. Andrews), Meg Clark is the Secretary, Clare Fowles is responsible for Membership and Sheila Godfrey is the Treasurer. Jane Potgieter has kindly agreed to be co-opted and will be responsible for co-ordinating speakers. She will welcome input and suggestions of suitable people from members.

Lockdown has been a time of emotional highs and lows, with most of us experiencing great differences in living our daily lives. It has been a time for introspection, loneliness, finding coping mechanisms for various problems, developing new or rediscovering old hobbies, renewing contact, via different methods with family and friends, perhaps even rediscovering ourselves, our resilience, our humanity. It has also been a time of sadness and loss for many people – loss of loved ones, jobs, income and other losses in various forms and guises. For those members who have lost loved ones in this period, our thoughts and prayers go out to you. Lockdown has been a long haul for most people. It has required a change of mindset and engendered an appreciation of the 'little' things in life, which we perhaps took for granted previously. Leo Brusaglia is quoted as saying 'Too often we underestimate the power of touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn life around'.

The Zoom courses offered by the various branches of U3A, including our own, have been an absolute boon for members with access to them. We are indebted to many of the branches for allowing us access to their presentations, most especially U3A Overberg, U3A Cape Town and U3A Johannesburg who have been very generous in taking us on board.

Grateful thanks are also due to the Virtual Lockdown Committee for all the work done during Lockdown. Special mention must be made of Gill Ansell who has tirelessly forwarded information of Zoom meetings, Quizzes and Answers, Newsletters etc. She also fielded a number of questions via phone calls and WhatsApp very graciously.

A very big 'Thank You' goes to Kevin Shelver who was responsible for the St. Andrew's sound system at meetings for many years. He is unable to do this any longer due to health reasons. We hope he enjoys his 'retirement'.

The Committee is very grateful to Tim O'Sullivan for agreeing to take over from Kevin. He will need one or two volunteers who are prepared to be trained and to assist him. Whoever is prepared to assist, please contact Meg and she can facilitate contact with Tim.

A Meeting of the Committee was held on 26 October 2021. At this meeting the discussion centred around the following matters:

1. Once face to face meetings are resumed, should it be mandatory for members to be vaccinated for Covid19? Helen Batting presented a written recommendation from Dr Richardson to the effect that only vaccinated members be allowed to attend.

2. The question of starting small groups was also discussed. It was decided that small groups could be started again, at the discretion of the group leaders. All Covid19 protocols must be followed.

3. Once face to face meetings are re-instituted, Covid Protocols, appropriate at the time, must be in place.

**Welcome to new members:**

Marlene van Wyk and Alan Hill. We hope that you will enjoy your membership of U3A East London

Please look out for your U3A name badges at the door at our first meeting at St Andrews (and as per the resolution above, WEAR IT!!)



**November Birthdays**

Doreen Ward, Keith Marshall, Jane Potgieter, Blyth van Niekerk, Joan Barrow, Beryl Keil, Alison Horsfall, Shirley Ellis, Louis Laubscher, Jeffrey Sadler, Clare Fowle, Rendall Garrett

**December Birthdays**

Yvonne Hilton, William Martinson, Chagan Chibba, Anette Ludick, Allan Brent, Raman Khandoo, Rosalie Weyer, Denny van der Zee, Desiree Schulze, Paul Hammond, Denise Weldon, Meg Clark, Frikkie Peters, Neela Dhaya

**January Birthdays**

Denise Fielding, Ray Mandy, Alison Schultz, Margaret Wood, Kay Poonasamy, Angela O'Sullivan, Carol van Niekerk, Sandra Sterling, June Evans, Judith Tonkin, Penny Schultz, Sally Chapman, Eddie Foster, Colin Raasch, Eileen Betteridge, Petrina Sierra, Lynne Woods,

**Course Reports**

**MAHJONGH**

Little did we realise, when we had our last session in March 2020, that we would not see each other for 19 months. Thanks to U3A committee member, Peter Dangerfield, who acted as the liaison and Parklands, who made the Oak Room available for us, we were able to resume our Mahjongh activities in October 2021.

We met with mixed emotions: very sad as we remembered three of our Mahjongh players and the spouse of a fourth who had passed away since we had last met, but very happy to see each other again. There was hilarity as some of us tried to remember the names of the tiles, what was a "pung", what was a "chow", what went clockwise and what went anti-clockwise! However, like riding a bicycle, it soon came back to us.

We welcomed three new members who joined our U3A specifically for Mahjongh and hope that they will enjoy the other U3A activities, once these are opened up again.

We have decided to "make hay while Covid stays away" and to get our money's worth from our R50.00 subscriptions. In addition to the meeting in October and three meetings in November, we plan to meet on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December. We shall communicate with members when we can resume activities in January 2022.

Gill Ansell – Mahjongh Course Leader

## **CANASTA/SAMBA GROUP**

We are looking to restart this group again towards the end of January, Covid and Parklands permitting. Many of our players have started playing Samba, so both activities will be offered. A refresher Canasta course will be offered towards the end of January to those who have not played in a while. All players will be contacted in January with the dates, if we get the go-ahead.

## **ARMCHAIR TRAVEL**

I was encouraged by Ann King to start Armchair Travel. I have been looking back, and find the first talk on a trip to Vietnam was given by me on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015, with 21 members present in the Indaba room. Over the years, we have wandered from the Antarctic to Iceland; from Argentina to Japan; from the archaeology of Turkey (long before the Pyramids) to the Palace of Parliament in Romania- the second largest but heaviest building in the world.

All this ended with a crash with the hard Lockdown in March 2020. I have done a couple of Zoom talks since then and we have found, as the South African U3A community has come together through Zoom, that Armchair Travel is not unique to East London.

The next couple of months will show the severity of the Covid fourth wave and the extent to which we will be able to meet face to face again. No one has been doing much travelling outside South Africa, but the photos and memories of trips remain. I also have in mind that we can repeat some of the earlier talks. If any member is willing to give a travel talk, to repeat an earlier one, or to give a Zoom presentation, could they contact me and I will judge if we can reinstate this popular series?

John Stoddard 082 466 7095

## **COMPUTERS**

The Johannesburg branch of U3A have saved recordings of **computer lessons** available to view online or to download. These Zoom presentations, starting from April 2021, are highly recommended and cover a wide variety of topics.

Some of these topics include: Music, YouTube, Smartphones (and cameras), WhatsApp, Staying Safe Online and Internet Web Sites.

This is the link to the 'Computer Sessions 2021'

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uR1219sApzDBIIVIP7PZzeEnTrAVOdHN>

There are (almost) 200 U3A talks available where you can access any presentations you might have missed from other branches, viz. Cape Town, Helderberg, Johannesburg East and Knysna.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1DcBXj-ADQxch96eFk-1Q7F-IBNCbOx6?usp=sharing>

If you cannot connect to these talks, please contact me for assistance.

Pam Hobson

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## **THE U3A EAST LONDON WRITING GROUP**

When U3A started in East London in 2007 the Writing Group was one of the original groups with Gavin Stewart (ex Prof of journalism at Rhodes University and ex Editor of the *Daily Dispatch* as the leader. When he left for Cape Town with his family in 2012, he was replaced as leader by Nancy Tietz who along with Denise Fielding and Laura Maynard are remaining founding members.

The Group meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of every month except December and our meetings are open to all U3A members. Owing to Covid-19 we've been meeting in Zoom and because of load-shedding we've had to change the time of some of our meetings but this info and the link we use will be available from The Hon Secretary of U3A.

At the meetings various aspects of writing are discussed or we might do a bit of speed writing, an exercise in the use of parts of speech or development of characters. During the second half of the meeting members are invited to read their work which is then discussed by the group.

We find outlet for our writings through reading our stories, publishing in our monthly Web-page which is on the U3A Website and every so often we publish a selection of our best work in print under the title *Tales of all Kinds*.

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Nancy Tietz

For the last edition of 2021 readers can look forward to a 'bumper read' of stories, anecdotes, poems and jokes. The page will go on the website later than usual.

Noreen Burton

## **EAST LONDON U3A BOOK CLUB**

The U3A East London Book Club met today for the first time in a year. The previous meeting was in the BOMA at Parklands, last November, prior to the next set of Lockdowns.

Ten of the 12 members were thrilled to meet and catch up in the Oak Room at Parklands on 18 November 2021 for our first meeting in a year. We hope to continue on a monthly basis and expressed our gratitude for having survived.

Ellen Ettinger

May we all remain happy and healthy, enjoy the company of friends and family and are able to start meeting each other at U3A meetings in the New Year.

Diana van Cittert

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