U3A Meadowbank

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NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER / MAHURU 2024

Greetings from the temporary, deputy, acting president.

The August meeting was held on Monday August 19th, a beautiful winters day. Spring is coming, really. My snowflakes are flowering, although most of my foxglove seedlings have disappeared and the advice online for yellowing foliage is either not enough water or too much water. Thanks for that.

We welcomed three new members, John and Catherine Butchard and Guy Cowley.

Our acting president, Gay Williams, contracted Covid a week before the meeting and so had to relinquish her presidential role. Hence the deputy. She was also scheduled to be the main speaker for the meeting. We were in a bit of a pickle but, fortunately, Alan Davidson volunteered to be the main speaker at very short notice, for which we are all extremely grateful. The mini speakers for the meeting were Jill Wilson, convenor of the Saints and Sinners group, who introduced her group to us, and Margaret Davidson and Terry Lord who gave a presentation on the does and don'ts of op shop donations. Essentially their message was, if you wouldn't buy it, the op shop can't sell it.

As indicated above, the main speaker was Alan Davidson who spoke on Bishop Selwyn and the early history of the College of St John, topics on which he is an, if not the, expert. He covered the history of the college from its founding by Bishop Selwyn and its beginnings at Waimate in 1842, through the move to Purewa in Auckland, the Kohimarama purchase, the typhoid epidemic of 1847, the founding of the Melanesian Mission and the scandal of 1852. We were in very good hands and Alan's fascinating presentation was much appreciated. Among many riches I was particularly struck by the observations from Maungarei (Mount Wellington) by Samuel Marsden in 1820 who described the area as "the most cultivated land in NZ" and by Henry Williams in 1833 who viewed "no signs of habitation".

John Goodman

Whakataukī / Words of Wisdom

Time to enrich our days with some more words of wisdom from around the world!

We are not going to be able to operate our Spaceship Earth successfully nor for much longer unless we see it as a whole spaceship and our fate as common. It has to be everybody or nobody.

Buckminster Fuller, engineer, designer, and architect (12 Jul 1895-1983)

I'm fed up to the ears with old men dreaming up wars for young men to die in.

George McGovern, senator, author, professor, and WWII pilot (19 Jul 1922-2012)

Who's Who for Monday 16th September 2024 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: French

Mini speakers: Chansina Chin from IHC, '75 years in our community.'

Guest speaker: Marie-Ann Quin, Retired Midwife and author. Marie-Ann, visiting from near Te Awamutu, will talk about her life changing transition into retirement following her long career in midwifery, and her recent successful publication of her first novel 'Emerald to Pounamu', set in Aotearoa from the early 1840s onwards.

Marie-Ann has worked with mothers and babies all her career. Along the way she completed courses in creative writing, interviewing t3chniques and historical research. These combined skills enable her to authentically document stores of births and vast changes in midwifery from settler times to the present day. At first starting with the intention of writing one novel, she is now working towards a series of three or four, to give full scope to a lifetime of experience, and over two decades of research.

Who's Who for Monday 21st October 2024 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: Books and Authors

Mini Speaker: Music (Roger Peak); Memoir Writing (David Arrowsmith)

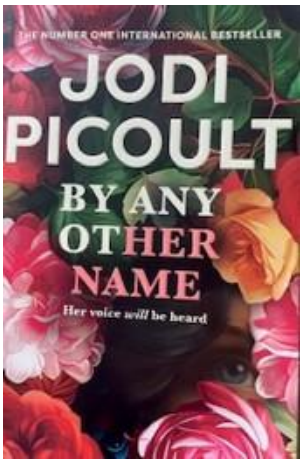
Guest speaker: Dr Alan Barber, Neurological Foundation of New Zealand. Professor of Clinical Neurology, Auckland Medical School: "Pulling Out Clots to Treat Stroke." Professor Barber graduated from the Otago Medical School and completed his neurology training in Auckland. In 2000, he received a PhD from the University of Melbourne. In 2001, he returned to New Zealand and established the stroke unit at Auckland City Hospital, which has a very active thrombolysis and endovascular thrombectomy treatment program. In 2008, he was appointed the inaugural Neurological Foundation of New Zealand Professor of Clinical Neurology. Since 2009, he has been the deputy director (clinical) of the Centre for Brain Research at the University of Auckland. The Centre for Brain Research is a unique partnership between scientists, clinicians and the community, with the aim of developing new treatments for brain disease and shaping New Zealand's healthcare policy. In 2022, he was elected President of the Australia and New Zealand Association of Neurologists (ANZAN) and will hold this position until 2025. ANZAN is the specialty body that represents neurologists in Australia and New Zealand.

Meadowbank U3A group attending the Auckland Network Event on 27th July

Book of the month: Gay Williams

'By Any other Name ' by Jodi Picoult

Readers will be familiar with the many books written by this author and this is her latest book published in 2024.
By any other name covers the fascinating topic of the works attributed to Shakespeare and those who believe his name was given to the plays and poetry written by others.
This story is set, in two time periods and the writing of two women - Melina Green and Emilia Bassano – both forced to hide behind another name to make their voices heard.
Melina addresses the question of how difficult it has been through the ages for women to be recognised as writers, to get their work published, and her own efforts to write about the story of Emilia who is one of her ancestors.
Emilia lives in Shakespeare's time, was educated and a gifted writer. Her story describes how society of the time couldn't contemplate the idea that women could write at all let alone write a play portraying women's feelings and abilities. Indeed, women were forbidden to write for a public audience.
Her story outlines how she corrected and enhanced the written work of male friends, sold her plays to Shakespeare for him to 'own' and publish.
I found the way Jodi pulled the two stories of Melina and Emilia together a fascinating read, and learned a lot about the controversial opinions about Shakespeare's authorship, which began in his own time and continue today.



Next Monthly Meeting: Monday 16th September 2024 at 10 am at St Chad's.

Don't forget to send us your U3A news to include in the next newsletter – we rely on your contributions

Deadline for OCTOBER 2024 newsletter items is WEDNESDAY 25th SEPTEMBER 2024.

Expect receipt confirmation

If you change your personal details, OR LEARN OF THE BEREAVEMENT OF A U3A MEMBER, please email the change to u3ameadmemb@gmail.com. Please include YOUR full name, physical address, phone number and email address.

TO CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS please use the correct gmail addresses below:

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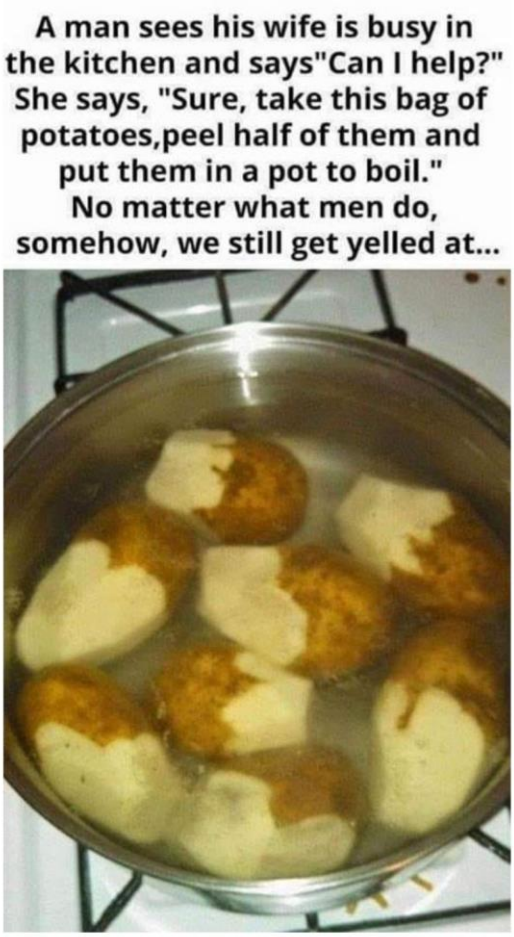
Something Amusing

Letters

To The Times:

On the subject of book lists, in Chapters Bookstore in Dublin there is a terrible warning. A notice states: "Shoplifters will be made [to] read *Ulysses*. If we catch you twice it's *Finnegans Wake*."
John Colclough, Durrow, Co Laois



Something Interesting

Nature

Bug boffins have found that some ants amputate the injured limbs of their nest mates to prevent infection, says NPR. The Florida carpenter ant is known to be viciously territorial, often getting into violent skirmishes with rival colonies and picking up combat wounds in the process. But rather than just licking the injuries clean as other species do, these clever critters bite the affected appendage off – making them the only animal other than humans to conduct such amputations. It works: the procedure saves the patient from death 90% of the time.

On the way out

Camembert might be "facing extinction" in France, says Emma Beddington in *The Guardian*. Industrial production means that the fungus required to make the cheese – *Penicillium camemberti* – is

“dangerously lacking in genetic diversity” and losing the ability to reproduce. The news “landed hard” with my husband, who’s from Normandy. “Camembert is a religion there: his grandparents ate it for breakfast, dipped in their morning coffee.”

Climate scientists are working with indigenous tribes (BBC)

A Tiwi local spearfishes on Bathurst Island, Northern Territory, Australia. Scientists have been working with indigenous communities to study coastal erosion (Credit: Getty Images)

Native peoples have long collected environmental data. Now scientists are cataloguing these observations and learning how they're affecting indigenous communities globally.

When the warm nights used to come each summer, Frank Ettawageshik would spend most of his time outdoors, sleeping outside, right on the ground. Today, he balks at the thought.

"I was 35 or so before I ever saw a tick," says the 74-year-old executive director of the United Tribes of Michigan, a Native American advocacy group. Now in northern Michigan, he says, "there's ticks all over the place".

Ettawageshik belongs to the Anishinaabe people, whose members are from the Great Lakes. His own Tribal Nation is the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, who have lived in the northwestern shores of Michigan's lower peninsula for centuries. Besides the spread of ticks, a phenomenon exacerbated by rising temperatures, they've witnessed the struggling populations of whitefish in nearby Lake Michigan and the gradual changes in harvests from the sugar maple tree, whose name in Odawa is "*niinatig*" — meaning "our tree". Research suggesting warmer temperatures might force sugar maples out of Michigan add to Ettawageshik's concerns. "Our tree is going to be moving away from us," he says.

Ettawageshik's tribe has observed many changes to their ancestral lands over hundreds of years, but Ettawageshik says human-caused climate change is different. "It's happening at a pace that we don't normally see."

For many people, climate science brings to mind satellite observations, temperature records or the analysis of ice cores. But there's plenty more data besides that. Indigenous communities that have long lived close to the land — and have traditionally depended on deep knowledge of their environments to survive — often hold their own records and recollections. These can include extraordinary details about alterations in weather patterns, changes in vegetation or unfamiliar behaviour of animals that have emerged under their watch.

The Anishinaabe tribal community have been collaborating with scientists to document struggling populations of whitefish in Lake Michigan

Today, anthropologists and climate researchers working for Western institutions are increasingly turning to indigenous people to ask what they have observed about the world around them. In the process, these scientists are learning that indigenous communities have been cataloguing, in their own way and often in their own language, data at a hyper-local level — insights that Westernised climate science might miss — and also how that change is affecting people.

"I believe in Native science — that it's real science," says Richard Stoffle, an anthropologist at the University of Arizona, lead author on a 2023 paper that includes numerous observations from Anishinaabe people belonging to three tribes in the Upper Great Lakes. The anonymous interviews, conducted in 1998 and 2014, feature comments on a wide range of environmental changes witnessed by Anishinaabe people over the decades: hotter summers, drier springs, mushrooms emerging at unusual times of the year, or plants that don't yield as much fruit or sap as they used to.

The recollections, Stoffle says, make it clear the Anishinaabe people have been monitoring anthropogenic climate change long before it was a regular topic of public discussion.

"It's not like it was in the old days, I think the nights and days aren't as cold as they used to be," said one contributor. "That's what brings that sap up into the trees. It draws it and pushes that sap up. I used to hear those trees snap up there in the woods because, those maple trees, that sap would freeze and crack the trees."

"Wow, that is a spring morel! Finding it here in September is insane!" another participant commented on a mushroom observation.

Asking indigenous people about the changes they are witnessing helps us to understand what matters to them, what issues require attention, says Victoria Reyes-García, an anthropologist at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies in Spain, and co-author of a 2021 article in the Annual Review of Environment and Resources about turning to indigenous knowledge and values to help address environmental problems.

Sea levels in the Southern Hemisphere

Off the north coast of Australia lie the Tiwi Islands, Sergio Jarillo, an anthropologist at the University of Melbourne, has been surveying indigenous people about the environmental changes they are seeing. In a paper published in March 2023, Jarillo and colleagues present comments from participants alongside drone-captured imagery of coastlines that show the coastal erosion that worries many members of the community. Erosion is a natural process, but in this case, it is probably exacerbated by rising sea levels caused by anthropogenic climate change, says Jarillo. "Consulting with local people gives you a more complete, and holistic, picture than you would ever get just using measurements."

To geomorphologists, scientists who study the Earth's surface, the development would be far from surprising. So why make the effort to ask indigenous people about it? The difference is that they can provide granular data that a satellite image could never supply — such as photos of the beach, shown to Jarillo and colleagues, taken by islanders during the 1950s and 1960s. "There was a fish trap that was permanently on the beach," Jarillo says, referring to a traditional structure for catching fish. "There's no longer space."

The Tiwi community has been around for long enough to notice substantial changes, and they spend a lot of time in direct contact with the environment, adds Jarillo. "They know where there is erosion, they know if there's a creek that is drying up."

It is a social justice issue, too, because these environmental changes can have significant effects on the health and well-being of people who live on these islands. Many participants who contributed to the research expressed concerns about land lost to erosion near to a renal dialysis centre in the settlement of Wurrumiyanga — an important health-care facility in a community where kidney failure is the leading cause of death. Highlighting indigenous people's knowledge of threats like this might prompt action. The very act of documenting such information is potentially significant because, the paper authors note, "in the case of the Tiwi, there has been no local, territory, or Commonwealth government initiatives to support climate change adaptation".

White birch is felled in Maine as part of a community forest management programme to boost populations of sugar maple trees (Credit: Getty Images)

Nelson Chanza, a climate adaptation scientist at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa, also recorded finer details after talking to direct witnesses of changes to the environment in Zimbabwe. In a study published in 2022, he and a colleague gathered observations made by 37 indigenous elders from the Mbire District in northern Zimbabwe. This, Chanza says, is a part of the world where meteorological data collection is relatively sparse: The study area is about 50 miles (80km) from the nearest weather station.

The elders, whose average age is 63, helped to fill in the gaps by recounting memories of how the environment has changed over the years. Many observed that the rainy season now starts later and ends sooner than it once did. But there were variations on this point, suggesting different areas were drying up at different rates. "That detail: you tend to lose it if you only rely on the meteorological data," says Chanza. In addition, elders related how various fruits, such as Uapaca kirkiana (mazhanje), also known as sugar plums, are becoming less abundant, smaller in size, and poorer in quality.

Reports like this are full of information and yet "they might be treated as anecdotal," says Reyes-García. In an attempt to encourage non-anthropologists to take such information seriously, and to standardise data collection involving indigenous communities, Reyes-García and colleagues have developed a study protocol which could be applied to any community anywhere in the world.

It involves collecting, for example, meteorological data as well as carrying out multiple interviews with indigenous people who have lived a long time in a particular place. Comments with group consensus would then be classified in a database. Entries in this database could catalogue anything from observations about wind speed and temperature to animal behaviour. Such standardisation could help to make such information, though admittedly stripped of its colour and richness, appealing to climate researchers and international bodies such as the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, says Reyes-García. Knowing what is important to indigenous communities is also beneficial because it helps those involved in planning mitigation or adaptation strategies to do so appropriately, says Reyes-García.

Data and a way of life

Listening carefully can reveal the true depth of the challenges faced by indigenous communities, too — so by recording their observations of climate change, there is an opportunity to work on climate justice. "I see my culture starting to disappear," is how one indigenous participant in a 2022 study described the severity of change. The paper resulted from a two-day workshop attended by elders, knowledge holders and young adults (ages 19 to 30) from 12 Anishinaabe communities around the Great Lakes region.

One of those communities, the Magnetawan First Nation, had the initial idea for an information-gathering session. "They just said, 'Hey, this is something we're concerned about. Can you organise something?'" says lead author Allyson Menzies, a wildlife ecologist at the University of Guelph. As Menzies and her coauthors reported, the 37 participants discussed a range of effects they had noticed, such as how strawberries were appearing later in the year — July rather than June — and how fish spawning, which used to last a month, now continues for only about two and a half weeks because of rising river water temperatures.

The participants also said that passing on traditional harvesting and hunting techniques was becoming difficult since these depend on the climate behaving in a way that it no longer does. This concept of evaporating culture is familiar to many indigenous people. Inuit communities on Baffin Island, Canada, for instance, frequently report that, as temperatures soar, they are finding it harder to predict the weather, navigate the ice and pass on hunting skills to younger members.

In that sense, we might miss something important if we treat research involving indigenous communities as merely an exercise in filling in cells on a giant spreadsheet, says Ben Orlove, an anthropologist at Columbia University in New York, who co-authored an article about climate anthropology in the 2020 *Annual Review of Anthropology*. "I think the indigenous people are saying the whole problem with climate change is not the data gaps," he says. "It's the limits in your framework." Speaking broadly, he says there's a tension between the Western view of the natural world as a resource to be exploited and the indigenous view of a world where humans and nature are part of one single whole.

Ettawageshik agrees: Traditional knowledge is not just an encyclopedic list of facts. What matters, he says, is the Odawas' ongoing relationship with beings — plants, animals and natural places.

"We're but one spot in that web of life," says Ettawageshik. "We knew that in that web of life we could not survive without the other beings and, those other beings, they agreed to take care of us. And we agreed to take care of them."