

# Learning for Life



Newsletter # 14

November 2018

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I turned around and the year had gone. I'm sure that I can already hear the Christmas bells. Am I imagining it or can you hear them as well?

What a busy year we've had with a number of new activities adding to the others that continue with amazing dedication by both tutors and participants.

The Writing for Pleasure group was invited to support a unique photographic exhibition titled "Beyond the Visible" by writing prose and poetry about gardens for the annual Rose Festival. I hope you had the opportunity to see the unusual "infrared" images.

The talents of the two art groups never ceases to amaze me and once again a fabulous exhibition was hung in the Renmark Paringa Council offices during the Rose Festival.

I hope to feature U3A members in future newsletters and begin by introducing Alan Key whose talents with mosaic need to be seen.

We also thank Alan for putting much effort into patching and painting what is now our own administrative office. We hope to have this manned on a regular basis next year so that you and others can wander by and see what we are offering at U3A Riverland.

Remember that some activities require a

minimum number of participants to become active. We don't want to disappoint people who have offered to run a course, so please take a look at what is being offered in the new year. You will receive your program soon.

**Remember that you MUST be a financial U3A member to take advantage of any of these activities.**

As usual, feel free to contact any of the facilitators to find out more about their offerings.

As editor for the past 4 years I thought it was time to update our newsletter banner to something a little more modern. I hope you like the fresh new look and I invite you to "take the road to lifelong learning". Maybe that could become our new slogan.

Can you please respond to the Christmas invitation you received by separate email and help celebrate another year of keeping active: mentally, physical and socially. Let's close the year in our usual fun way.

I sincerely thank all tutors who have given their time so freely and wish you all a Merry Christmas. I hope to see you all again in 2019.

**EDITOR**  
**Diana March**



COMMITTEE MEMBER

Born in Gawler, I spent my childhood in Moonta, Balaklava and Waikerie, so have always considered myself a country girl even after moving to Adelaide for secondary education.

A year after marrying my handsome young doctor we lived in Britain for 2 1/2 years for his work and our first child was born in North Wales. We settled in Berri in 1984 and two more children followed. My handsome GP is not so young now but we both love it here in Berri.

I have a Dip T in upper primary a Bachelor of Nursing and worked in the Renmark Hospital for ten years. I have a love of languages and learning, cold stormy beaches, the outback, writing and music. I avoid housework at all costs, don't sing but have a passion for art which I, together with Bev Hartigan, are passing on to the morning art group. My own art has been called "experimental".



MEREDITH DUNN



Meet  
Alan  
Key

You have definitely heard this man's name before. Thanks to Alan we have two fabulously refurbished rooms in our clubhouse.

Apart from his patching and painting skills, Alan has a passion for mosaics and members were invited to see some of his works at his home. One of his larger mosaic pieces is featured at the Kingston Primary School.

We were all amazed by Alan's mosaic and art works and have a huge appreciation of the skill involved in producing such complex pieces.



See more of Alan's amazing mosaics on page 3

**FROM THE PRESIDENT Brent Morrell**



Thank you to all who have contributed to a successful fourth year of U3A Riverland. Just by your membership you have helped us achieve our aims of keeping active mentally, physically and socially. By partaking in U3A activities, taking the lead as tutors and facilitators or playing your part in administration, all of you are important.

2018 has seen some excellent additions to our program, notably Beginners' German, French Rendezvous, Beginners' Bridge and most recently we have been able to gain a foothold south of the river with a Yoga class at Moorook. A new activity well worth supporting is the Friday Forum group which offers an opportunity to discuss the things that matter in our world today.

At this time, despite a good deal of lobbying, U3A South Australia has been unable to obtain ongoing funding by the State Government. Consequently, U3A Riverland will not be receiving the annual grant we have enjoyed to date, nor will our Public Liability Insurance be funded past 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Your committee believes we can manage this for now and there will be no increase in membership fees for 2019. We continue to have the lowest fees of any U3A in the state. For this we are very grateful to the support of our local Councils, and our landlord, the Berri RSL, who have been most accommodating.

For those of you whom I don't catch up with over the next few weeks, may I wish you the compliments of the season and the hope that you continue to support and enjoy U3A in 2019.

**Friday forum**

During 2018 Friday Forum was established as a group where participants would feel comfortable discussing and debating topics relevant to our current lifestyles and community wellbeing, especially those issues often misunderstood, ignored or deemed too difficult for ordinary citizens to tackle. It included topics such as consumerism, the rise of technology, the widespread invasion of robotics, the use and misuse of social media, security of individual and aggregated data and the fiasco of the by-elections underpinned by a review of our Constitution and the fragile state of democracy in Australia and globally. We were not afraid to visit difficult questions or consider the consequences of individual, group, State or even Federal decision making. Between the serious debate there was always time to find humour in the foibles of our fellow humans.

nominate a Substitute Decision Maker who can convey your wishes to medical professionals if you are unable to do so. Filling in this document gives you control over a crucial time in your life as well as giving certainty to your family around your wishes. It is imperative to discuss with your family, doctors and Substitute Decision Maker the content of your document. Review and update, your wishes regularly and distribute copies of the document to your family, medical professionals, family lawyer and Substitute Decision Maker, as well as keeping copies for yourself. An Advanced Care Directive is easy to overlook or put off doing but it is a document that should be addressed sooner rather than later, at a time when you are stress free and able to think about your wishes rationally. When you are overwhelmed by illness or accident is not a time to be making such important decisions.

In October we discussed the contentious and very emotive issue of voluntary euthanasia including the important aspect of Advanced Care Directives. These are legal documents available on-line, at your medical or community health centre and local hospitals. They allow you to specify the types of treatment you would or would not want to be administered to you if you became very ill e.g. the insertion of feeding tubes or doses of strong drugs. It also gives you the opportunity to

We look forward to Friday Forum continuing in 2019. The difficulties that accompany modern living will undoubtedly escalate as will the need for rational discussion of them. We cannot afford to dismiss any issue as too hard, think we cannot make a difference or believe it is not our concern.

***Come and learn about, discuss, give your point of view, hear others' opinions in a very supportive, friendly and fun milieu at Friday Forum.***



**Facilitators: Jan Owens, Pam Rule and Anne Chase**



## Mosaics by Alan Key

He's 80 years young and he's a character!

Born in London on 9 September 1938, Alan Key has embraced life with so much zest that he has ample to spare.

His wife June, also 80 (6 days older than Alan, he tells me) has been at his side for almost 60 years. They will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary next year. That's diamonds June!

Though born in London, Alan lived with his family in Antwerp, Belgium. The family left 6 days before the Germans invaded. His father's work took him to Canada where Alan spent his childhood, living in Montreal and Quebec.

At the conclusion of the war the family returned to Belgium and as a teenager Alan attended boarding school in Sussex, England.

He began his working career as an apprentice Marine Engineer with Thorne Cross, producers of one of the first steam launches and naval craft including mine sweepers.

Alan married June and spent 2 years at sea as an engineer before immigrating to Australia. He worked in the steelworks in Wollongong as a fitter and turner before bronchial problems saw

him move to South Australia (where he claims never to have suffered the ailment again). That's the good South Ozzie weather for you Alan!

Here he worked as a fitter and turner at the power station at Torrens Island and as an instrument fitter at the Moomba gas fields. Alan and June moved to Kingston on Murray approximately 10 years ago to be closer to their daughter.

What first drew Alan to my attention was his amazing work with mosaics but he assures me that this passion was fired only 5 years ago when he volunteered to assist the local Kingston Primary School to create some large scale mosaics. Residents attest to the amazing murals that resulted. After 12 months as a volunteer at the school Alan was "hooked", developing his own style and techniques for mosaics. Though he prefers to work on personal projects, he has completed some works for the Rain Moth Gallery in Waikerie.

However, this is only one of many hobbies that have kept Alan out of June's hair. The list is long and I wondered if he could possibly have done all of this in one lifetime.

He restored old cars, with a particular passion for Morris Minors and built sailing dinghies. For 8 years he enjoyed scuba diving with the British Sub Aqua

Club. His sailing passion saw him race a 42 foot yacht with his son in Geographe Bay in Western Australia.

Other hobbies have included silver smithing, enamelling and gemstones. He tells of an interest he developed in thimbles. This piqued my interest. Created from silver, his unique thimbles were crowned with a silver threepence. (I don't think he thought I knew this currency ... but I did!)

I'm exhausted just listening to all of this but he then tells me that he and June celebrated their milestone birthdays a couple of months ago on the Conflict Islands, where he was hell-bent on mastering paddle boarding.

I have to admit that I had consult Google. This is what it said: *"Don't be fooled by the name, this is paradise in the Coral Sea. A picturesque group of 21 islands surrounding a bright blue lagoon, the Conflict Islands are home to one of the world's most biodiverse reef systems."*

Then he proceeds to tell me that cannibalism in this region only ceased in the early 1970's!

Alan is an inspiration, not only for what he has achieved, but for his enthusiasm for life and his wicked sense of humour. I think "I'll have what he's having".



Country Arts SA in conjunction with Riverland Rose Festival produced several photographic displays featuring infrared photography. U3A's "Writing for Pleasure" group were invited to contribute poems or prose to compliment the photos, describe the gardens and write short film scripts. This prompted various writing styles: prose, rhyming and free-form poetry together with Haiku and Cinquain poetry.

Adelaide photographer and mentor, Sam Oster, worked with Mike Smart and Chad Vigar, two Renmark photographers, to produce the photos and short films. The exhibition, hung in the Chaffey Theatre foyer, was officially opened on October 20 and drew a good crowd who seemed fascinated by the infrared photography.

A video, produced by Chad Vigar, ran continuously during the exhibition and featured our written work. A professional booklet, printed by local PrintDNA, featured the photos and writings.

Two short films, 'Drought and Flood' (script by John Penna) and 'David Ruston' (script by Jenny Sanders) were screened in the pop-up art gallery where U3A artists also had their work on display and for sale.

It was a great opportunity to write with a purpose and the results were pleasing.



U3A writers John Penna, Jenny Sanders, Diana March, Di Turton, Anne Chase and Brent Morrell  
Absent: Elsie Madden



**"Beyond the Visible"**

**A LADY NAMED ROSE**

Dreamer  
Naked, forlorn  
Slumbering, recharging, renewing  
Nature's queen in repose  
Winter

Tomboy  
Awake, feisty  
Stirring, budding, shining  
Fresh, young and full of life  
Spring

Siren  
Shapely, opulent  
Blooming, bursting, exciting  
Wanton cascade of colour  
Summer

Rose  
Bold, serene  
Enduring, stunning, captivating  
Faithful to her promise  
Autumn

**Brent Morrell**

**CUPID**

An urchin sits amid the thorns  
Strumming his lute, you hear his tunes  
He turns his gaze, seeks you out  
Looking to entice your young heart

His hiding place is entangled  
Leaves and branches round him dangle  
Wind rustles, they gently slap  
Silver trees shine bright, the sky black

Wandering amid roses blooms  
The air embraces a sweet perfume  
There is Cupid playing his part  
Stirring a passion in your heart.

**John Penna**

**INFRARED**

Asleep  
Sun warms  
Roots in soil deep  
Life blood flows  
Clouds weep  
Buds burst  
Greet the day  
Thorns grow  
Sharp and neat  
The garden is awake  
Festival week  
Voices murmur  
Feet pause  
Noses inhale  
Nymphs sleep  
Bees hum  
Butterflies dance  
Breeze whispers to the leaves  
Enchantment

**Di Turton**

Bird songs  
Trilling sweet notes  
Kookaburra's harsh laugh  
Magpies warble carolling songs  
Loved sounds

**Elsie Madden**

Images  
Infrared  
Wavelengths unseen  
Surreal  
Other worldly  
No hint of green

**Diana March**

Birdsong  
Pure musical  
Twittering trilling cheeping  
Bringing the garden to life  
Serenity

Roses  
Perfumed riotous  
Clustering climbing drooping  
A feast for the eyes  
Perfection

Garden  
Fragrant colourful  
Enticing thrilling captivating  
So much to discover  
Enchantment

Trees  
Silvered dramatic  
Sprawling weeping blossoming  
Shadings of light and dark  
A new world

**Jenny Sanders**



# The Bilingual Advantage

## A Secret Weapon in Dementia Prevention

[www.alzheimers.net](http://www.alzheimers.net)

*Have you ever wished you spoke a second language? A new study may give you more motivation to expand your language skills. The largest study on the topic has concluded that speaking a second language may delay the onset of three different types of dementia. The study is the first to report that speaking two languages can delay the onset of dementia, regardless of education level.*

The study was done by researchers at Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences in Hyderabad, India. 648 seniors with varying forms of dementia and literacy were evaluated and led researchers to conclude that those participants who spoke a second language were able to delay Alzheimer's Disease, vascular dementia, and frontotemporal dementia by 4.5 years.

### How Was the Study Completed?

- 648 people were evaluated with an average age of 66 years old.
- 14% of participants were illiterate, they could not read nor write.
- 391 participants spoke two or more languages
- 240 participants were diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease
- 189 had diagnosed vascular dementia
- 119 had diagnosed frontotemporal dementia
- The remainder had mixed dementia or dementia with Lewy bodies

After evaluating the participants, researchers found that those who spoke a second language delayed certain types of dementia by an average of 4.5 years. There was no additional benefit to those who spoke more than two languages and education, gender, and occupation had no effect on the delay.

### Why Would Speaking a Second Language Delay Dementia?

Although why this phenomenon occurs is not yet known, speaking two languages requires a specific type of brain training and switching between two languages requires a specific type of attention. That part of the brain, if exercised, may be what delays certain types of dementia.

"Speaking more than one language is thought to lead to better development of the areas of the brain that handle executive functions and attention tasks, which may help protect from the onset of dementia." said study author Suvarna Alladi, DM, with Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences in Hyderabad, India.

### Future Studies May Show Dementia Delay Through Other Brain Activity

More studies in different places throughout the world need to be completed to see if the same effect is found. The study needs to be replicated in different populations and cultures to ensure there is not another factor in the delay of dementia.

*U3A Riverland offers both French and German*

## BRIDGE FOR BEGINNERS

We have a second group take up the challenge of learning the "king" of card games.

On Friday morning the U3A clubroom resounds with the slap of plastic and beginners attempting to make sense of tricks, bids, trumps and suits. For some it's a foreign language.

Hopefully this will lead to some social bridge being played in the new year, so if you haven't played since uni days, or even more recently and would like to join some tyros, register your interest and we shall see what transpires.



A yoga class for seniors commenced in early September at the Moorook Hall. The locals certainly embraced the activity with an average attendance of 8-9 regulars.

Comments from participants include:

- Good to have an activity for Moorook people
- A delightful break in busy times
- Great not having to travel and the yoga sessions are enjoyable
- Good use of Moorook Hall. Enjoyable yoga sessions at senior pace. Great to interact with new people
- Lovely to be back doing yoga again. So relaxing
- I find the exercises beneficial both physically and mentally

## KNITTING GROUP

Some of the beautifully coloured garments that will be distributed by Rotary to needy children all over the world. Maybe you would like to get involved in something so worthwhile.



**COMING SOON!**

JOHN WOOD | BENITA COLLINGS | MAX GILLIES

# Senior Moments



**a comedy revue about 'old' people  
and the young people they have to deal with!**



Senior Moments is back for another national tour, with Gold Logie winner and veteran actor **John Wood** (*Blue Heelers*, *Rafferty's Rules*) and **Max Gillies** (*The Gillies Report*, *Once Were Leaders*) joining *Play School* icon **Benita Collings**, **Kim Lewis** (*Sons and Daughters*, *The Restless Years*) and **Russell Newman** (*A Country Practice*, *Underbelly*) in this senior theatrical sensation, with *Midday Show* Maestro **Geoff Harvey** on piano.

Senior Moments is a comedy revue about old people and the young people they have to deal with, with sketches and songs and performers who are old enough to know better, all making wicked fun of the trials and tribulations of growing old disgracefully.

laughter is the

## ADELAIDE DUNSTAN PLAYHOUSE

6-10 February 2019

More details online  
[www.seniormomentsshow.com.au](http://www.seniormomentsshow.com.au)

## best medicine

An old Yiddish proverb says, "What soap is to the body, laughter is to the soul." A good laugh can be compared to a mild workout—it exercises the muscles, gets the blood flowing, decreases blood pressure and stress hormones, improves sleep patterns and boosts the immune system

### A poem for Senior Citizens

A row of bottles on my shelf  
Caused me to analyse myself  
One orange pill I have to pop  
Goes to my heart so it won't stop

A little blue one that I take  
Goes to my hands so they won't shake  
The green ones that I use a lot  
Tell me I'm happy ... when I'm not

The purple pill goes to my brain  
And tells me that I have no pain  
The capsules tell me not to wheeze  
Or cough or choke or even sneeze

The red ones, smallest of them all  
Go to my blood so I won't fall  
The yellow ones, so big and bright  
Prevent my leg cramps in the night

Such an array of brilliant pills  
Help to cure all kinds of ills  
But what I'd really like to know ...

Is what tells each one where to go!

Anonymous

## What is a Grandparent?

(taken from papers written by a class of 8 year-olds)



- ☺ A grandfather is a man grandmother
- ☺ When they takes us for walks, they slow down past things like pretty leaves and caterpillars
- ☺ They don't say "Hurry up"
- ☺ Usually grandmothers are fat, but not too fat to tie your shoes
- ☺ They can take their teeth and gums out
- ☺ When they read to us, they don't skip. They don't mind if we ask for the same story over again
- ☺ Everybody should try to have a grandmother, especially if you don't have television because they are the only grown ups who like to spend time with us
- ☺ They wear glasses and funny underwear
- ☺ Grandparents are a lady and a man who have no little children of their own but they like other people's
- ☺ Grandmas never run out of hugs or cookies



## Quotes from grandparents:

- ☺ My grandkids believe I'm the oldest thing in the world. After two or three hours with them, I believe it, too.
- ☺ If I had known how wonderful it would be to have grandchildren, I'd have had them first.
- ☺ Elephants and grandchildren never forget.
- ☺ I have a warm feeling after playing with my grandchildren ... it's the liniment working.

