

As winter bites, I hope this newsletter finds you snuggled up in a warm, cosy spot. As much as I am recharged by the summer sun, winter draws me into myself—a time to read, write, paint or knit. What does winter do for you?

It is well documented that regular social interaction is crucial to healthy ageing. Many members enjoy a warming coffee or lunch before or after a U3A activity.

Speaking of coffee, please drop into Sprouts Café in Berri and take a look at the current art exhibition mounted by the U3A art group—it's titled "Fuelled by Caffeine".

Is getting to a course or activity proving difficult for you? Maybe the course you would really like to undertake has not been run yet. In the interim there is an alternative that you might like to consider.

Have a look at what is offered through U3A online? Of course it doesn't substitute for gathering with like-minded people but it may provide some activities that you would enjoy taking part in. More can be found on the website: www.u3aonline.org.au

"U3A Online is the world-first virtual University of the Third Age delivering online learning via the internet. All that's needed is access to a computer with an Internet connection - and some basic computing skills."

U3A Online offers an alternative, especially for those who are geographically, physically or socially isolated."

Remember that we are always looking for people to share their skills, talents or passion about something with others ... it's the basis of our organisation.

Our new Course Co-ordinator, Anna Harper, would love to hear how we can engage you in active learning.

Diana March (Editor)

COMMITTEE PROFILES

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR — ANNA HARPER

I clearly remember the moment I first learned about the University of the Third Age. In 1996, on a beach at dusk, I met a woman who was a member of the South Coast branch. Her enthusiasm for the organisation had such an impact on me that I filed the conversation away in my mind, determined to find out more.

After a career in administrative roles in various organisations, from print media to conservation programs, I retired in 2013. Talk about serendipity – in 2015 U3A Riverland was launched and I couldn't enrol fast enough into the photography and art classes to fulfil ambitions I've held all my life. If time allowed, I would enrol in more classes. Who wouldn't want the opportunity to learn new things without having to do exams and meet some fun, lovely people in the process?

As the newly elected Course Co-ordinator, U3A continues to amaze me. It is undoubtedly an exciting outlet for active retirees. A number of people have worked hard to build a solid foundation of activities and I am grateful for the encouragement and guidance Pam Rule has kindly given me as I attempt to pick up the baton and fill some very big shoes.

I look forward to being part of the U3A Riverland Committee who steer and serve the organisation in meeting its objectives and facilitate opportunities that allow members to further increase their education and social networks.

Please feel free to make suggestions about activities you would like to see run.



TREASURER — SHIRLEY SIMS

Having lived on a fruit property in Renmark for 47 years, I think I now qualify as a "Riverlander" – vastly different from my childhood on a dairy farm on Wild Dog Valley Road about 32kms from Naracoorte in the South East. (I never did see a wild dog!). It was an idyllic childhood, though quite isolated, involving travel to school on a bus, where my interest in education began. I was the instigator of playing 'schools' to pass the time and of course I was always the teacher!

After completing my teaching qualifications, I spent 12 months at Mount Gambier High School before transferring to Renmark High as a Commercial Studies Teacher. The day my third child started school my employment as a lecturer at TAFE (in the Administration and Finance Programs) began. Little did I know then that I would remain in that employment until I retired. There was no time for being a true 'blockie's wife', picking grapes, cutting fruit, pruning and driving tractors. I never did get the hang of the tractor!

My involvement with U3A Riverland was so perfectly timed to coincide with my retirement. My passion for education and learning continues. Together with your Secretary, Daina Braddock, Publicity Officer, Di March and Lyn Harvey I feel very privileged to have been part of the steering committee to help set up U3A Riverland and to be actively involved in both the First and the Third Age of learning.

Having 7 grandchildren, all living in the Riverland, I am in awe of children's thirst and excitement for learning. Hopefully this excitement is being re-ignited in retirees through U3A in the Riverland. As your Treasurer, guided by our dedicated committee, I will spend your money wisely.



Can you help?



We would love to run more activities. If you or someone you know is willing to facilitate an activity please let us know.

SOCIAL BIKE RIDING-with Ruth Strout

Do you want a beautiful way to start your day? How about a scenic bike ride along the mighty Murray with an experienced cyclist encouraging you along the way.

You too could enjoy this experience—just bring your bike and helmet. We are a small but enthusiastic group who meet on the lawns in front of the Renmark Hotel at 9.00am on Monday mornings.

Not only is the exercise good for us but we also find time to have a chat and a latte! We will resume our program after the July school holidays.

Come and join us – the more the merrier!



ASTRONOMY-with Phillip Sims

Two nights were planned for our astronomical evening. The first night proved too cloudy, but thankfully the following night was perfect for 'star gazing'.

Special thanks must go to Richard Challis for his extensive astronomical knowledge and equipment that he provided, in particular, the laser pointer that made it so easy to identify the particular planets and stars being discussed.

It was a most enjoyable evening for the members who attended, each leaving with an increased knowledge of the night skies above us.

Watch out for the scheduling of another evening sometime in September or October. New members are most welcome.

EXCEL SPREADSHEETS-with Kevin Deakin

Kevin has run beginner, intermediate and advanced level Excel classes and has personally used Excel every day for the past 25 years. We feel lucky to have access to this expertise so if you are interested in attending, we would like to know what level of proficiency you currently have (if any at all).

Beginner level: an introduction to the basics of Excel including simple formulas.

Intermediate level: builds on the basic skills to create charts and develop more complex formulas, lookup tables, databases, conditional formatting, and use the find and replace functions.

Advanced level: once users have become proficient at the previous level participants would learn about automation, macros, advanced formulae, pivot tables, external data, and reporting.

Excel has real advantages for personal use at home, or for those participating in community activities. It can be used for something as simple as grocery lists or household budgets. Other uses include documenting when your accounts fall due, record keeping, address management, cataloguing assets and contents for insurance records or your library and precious collections. Even organising family or community events can become so much easier.

If you don't have any skills, why not begin at the beginning!

If you are interested in joining an Excel class please email the Course Co-ordinator, Anna Harper at: u3acoursesriverland@gmail.com

Or telephone 0427 519 472 **no later than August 31**

Please include your level of proficiency in Excel.

FRENCH CONVERSATION-with Helen Simpson

Parlez vous Francaise? Un peu.

I hope that's spelled correctly, but if not, it doesn't really matter because our classes are about French conversation and no-one checks our spelling! Conversation is only part of the enjoyment in learning French at U3A Riverland ... coffee and lunch afterwards is equally enjoyed.

Our Facilitator, Helen Simpson, with much-welcomed support from David Bonnar, has been patiently listening to our broken phrases for the last six months.

We are very fortunate to have two such knowledgeable and experienced French speakers in our community. Helen and David work well as a team, providing a good balance of the necessary grammar and pronunciation.

Participants are given plenty of opportunities to join in conversations as best they can. We help each other and have lots of laughs along the way as we sometimes stumble over new expressions and even those we thought we knew so well! Looking back over the last six months I can see how much progress we have made.

Many thanks to Helen and David who have provided a friendly, relaxed atmosphere where making a mistake is seen as a natural part of the learning process.

Did you know that the French don't tell you to "mind your own business"... they tell you "Occupe – toi de tes oignons."deal with your own onions!

Please note that this class is not for people without some French language ability. If numbers warrant, a beginners class may be offered in 2017. Register your interest with the Course Co-ordinator, Anna Harper.



U3A ARTISTS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

by Daina Braddock

In February, 25 U3A members attended the advertised information session. It became clear that once again two classes were needed to accommodate everyone. Based on last year's successful program, the newcomers meet on Tuesday mornings while 16 continuing students from last year meet in the afternoon, their program extending their already established skills.

The morning/afternoon grouping is not very strict, with some people from the afternoon group coming in the morning and vice versa—some even choose to stay all day.

Can one be inspired by a cardboard takeaway coffee cup? Certainly, if it is decorated with artistic motifs. Visit Sprouts Café in Berri, just across the road from the River Lands Gallery (where the art classes are held) to view an exhibition titled "Fuelled by Caffeine" - paintings and drawings created by last year's art classes. Coffee and art go together quite well and even those who don't actually drink coffee, enjoy the lively discussions during breaks.

The afternoon group, who have accumulated a number of framed works between them, took part in another local exhibition at the Monash Hall, held at the same time as the Monash Monster Market. Judging by comments I overheard, it was a very impressive and eye catching exhibition.

Both art groups will be encouraged to take part in an exhibition at the Chaffey Theatre during Rose Week, as they did last year. Another event in the pipeline for these emerging artists is a visit to Hans Heysen's home, "The Cedars", in the Adelaide Hills.

SALA (South Australian Living Artists), a month-long exhibition across all of South Australia, is happening again in August. U3A Riverland artists together with U3A Riverland creative writers will exhibit their very striking, richly coloured collaborative work titled "Colour Revealed" together with Haiku poetry inspired by the artwork. Watch out for this one! It is remarkable, not only visually, but also because of the beautiful words which describe it. Creative Writers are also artists!

Editor's note: *The art classes are extremely popular—most people attend for the whole year. To enable manageable-sized groups, Daina has only one intake of newcomers at the beginning of each year. If you are interested in joining an art class, please express your interest early.*



Australian Government Volunteer Award 2016

U3A Riverland was recognised with a Certificate of Appreciation for Australian Volunteers at an afternoon tea with Tony Pasin.

From left: Anne Chase, Brent Morrell, Shirley Sims, Diana March, Tony Pasin, Jan Owens

What is positive ageing?

<https://www.psychology.org.au>

Positive ageing is a term used to describe the process of maintaining a positive attitude, feeling good about yourself, keeping fit and healthy, and engaging fully in life as you age.

Ageing is often associated with many rewarding experiences. It is however also a time when significant changes might occur. For example, some people experience changes in physical functioning, social networks, employment, and bereavement can become more common. Keeping a positive attitude toward ageing is particularly important as it allows you to continue to feel good and have a sense of control as you face another part of the life cycle. As people age it is natural for them to move in and out of periods of positive ageing. Those who age positively live longer and healthier lives, and enjoy a good quality of life

Strategies to achieve positive ageing

There are a number of ways to prevent, delay or manage some of the physical, psychological, social and personal challenges people face as they age.

Maintaining a positive attitude

The way you feel about yourself and the ageing process can affect how you view life and the extent to which you are involved in activities and the opportunities life offers. If you can make choices and have control over important aspects of your life, and take part in and enjoy activities, you are more likely to feel good about yourself and get

Staying connected

Social interaction and relationships with others are associated with positive ageing and feeling optimistic about life. Maintaining social networks through membership of clubs, engaging in voluntary work and keeping in touch with family encourages interaction with others, prevents isolation and promotes good mental health and physical activity.

Keeping the brain active

Keeping the brain active, alert and flexible can promote good mental health and positive ageing throughout the lifespan. Having an active mind can be as simple as reading a book, learning a new hobby or problem solving (e.g. doing crosswords). Learning new skills is exercise for the brain and makes it work a little harder.

Managing stress

Stress is a natural part of life and a little stress can be beneficial.

The symptoms of stress vary greatly among different individuals. High levels of stress can produce emotional, behavioural, and even physical symptoms. In addition to affecting general wellbeing, stress can also impair the immune system and increase the risk of physical and mental health problems.

Significant changes associated with ageing can cause both short term and chronic stress. Stress can be caused by everyday hassles or be a result of difficult relationships, adjusting to retirement, financial concerns or chronic illness.

Keeping as free from stress as possible, and learning how to effectively cope with unavoidable stress, can promote positive ageing in all areas of your life.

Volunteering or seeking part-time employment

Many older people find part-time employment or voluntary work rewarding and a chance to give something back to the community. Any type of work can help to keep your mind sharp and can provide a social network outside of the home and family.

Engaging in physical activity

Regular physical activity is vital for improved health and wellbeing. It is never too late to get moving - the human body responds to exercise, regardless of age. Exercise is a great way to maintain good health, helps you thinking positively, recover from illness and reduce the risk of disease. It has been demonstrated that physical fitness is more important than weight loss.

Strength training is especially beneficial. It can help to build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints, which in turn will increase physical strength, and improve balance and mobility.

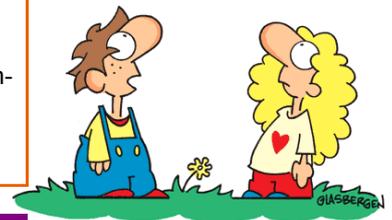
Taking part in leisure activities that you find interesting and suitable for your level of physical functioning is an effective way of becoming more active. People should undertake at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise, such as walking, every day.

Physical activity can also provide social interaction through being outdoors, engaging with others, or by becoming a member of an activity program or club.

It is important to remember that as you age, your physical capabilities are likely to change. Seeking guidance from a health professional before engaging in strenuous activity can reduce any risks involved

Having regular medical checks

Older people who have fewer medical conditions have a better quality of life, better mental health and are less restricted in their daily activities. By having regular medical check-ups, engaging in illness prevention (e.g. not smoking, drinking alcohol in moderation) and having regular tests or check-ups (e.g. blood pressure, dental) you can help to reduce the possible onset of chronic conditions.



"A butterfly is a caterpillar with a positive attitude"

Eating a healthy diet

Eating a healthy diet is important to maintaining a healthy weight, which will help to reduce the likelihood of developing conditions such as diabetes. A healthy weight will also improve energy levels and make it easier to participate in daily activities.

INSIDE EVERY OLDER PERSON IS A YOUNGER PERSON WONDERING WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED.

- Cora Harvey Armstrong