

Learning for Life



Newsletter # 24

April 2024

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welcome
-BACK-

This news/letter was “put to bed” in February 2021, after 23 editions. Little did I know how much it would be missed as a window into U3A Riverland’s activities. So ... it is with great pleasure that Issue 24 comes to you, almost 3 years later.

It would be difficult to recall all that has happened in between time except for that 5-letter C word. Boy, did that have an impact on all our lives. But that’s in the past and U3A Riverland continues to flourish in our 10th year of operation.

Our offerings have changed, though the stalwarts continue to enthuse new members. The Art classes have been a huge success since 2015 and we now

have three Tai Chi classes running in Renmark. The “Writing for Enjoyment” group, which for the past 8 years has met in Renmark, has relocated to our Berri clubrooms, so is more central. It’s difficult to single out a few activities when others, too, have run for many consecutive years. Remember that you can always check out our term schedule on our website.

The composition of the Management Committee (the real engine of the organisation) has also changed and I will introduce the new members to you over the coming editions. We had a good attendance at the AGM on March 7th and we sincerely thank these people for nominating to help run the organisation. Remember that we are a volunteer organisation and without the dedicated efforts of the committee and the tutors/facilitators, we would not be able to offer the activities you enjoy. We passionately believe in U3A’s motto: “Staying active—mentally, physically and socially”.

Our clubrooms are the heart of our U3A and over the years we have benefitted

from several grants which have allowed us to make our facility more comfortable. Our gratitude goes to Tony Guster who so eloquently argues our case for funding which has enabled us to install three reverse cycle air conditioners (essential on 40 degree days). Our membership fees have allowed us to purchase a new smart TV which will enable us to use digital media and hopefully link into some on-line learning activities.

We currently have 150 members. Word is slowly filtering out about what we offer and it is always heart-warming to hear how many of you have established new friendships by being a part of an activity.

We thank you for being a part of our U3A community and welcome any ideas you may have.



EDITOR
Diana March

YOUR COMMITTEE

BACK: Kerry Broughton (Course Co-Ordinator), Geoff March (Building Manager), Phillip Sims (Vice President), Shirley Sims (Treasurer) Carol Bennett

FRONT: Tony Guster (President), Anne Menzel (Course Statistics), Robbie Millar, Sevasti Johnson (Secretary)

ABSENT: Jude Sykes



These are the people who put up their hands to lead U3A Riverland this year.

We thank you for your time and effort.

AGM

... another good meeting

Ruth Tucker (previously a U3A tutor of French) gave a very interesting presentation about multiculturalism in the Riverland. Ruth has for many years worked closely with migrants and refugees in Renmark, as a teacher of English.



I was born in Berri just before WWII.

I don't remember much about Renmark until after the war. Petrol was rationed. But I do remember Berri ladies warning each other that if they wanted to shop in Renmark, they'd need to wear a hat and gloves.

At primary school in Berri I recall Lebanese, Greek and First Nations students. They were expected to become just like us. That was "assimilation".

My parents moved to a block on the 60 foot in Renmark while I was at school in Adelaide. I still have vivid memories of the sandstorms which blew in from Cooltong, where the returned soldiers were planting up.

A couple of newly arrived Italian girls helped in the apricot cutting shed, while other migrants (or new Australians) worked on the picking. Renmark was changing.

My first teaching job was in Darwin after which I worked in other positions elsewhere. During that time I, and much of Australia, was introduced to pizzas, avocados, olives, sweet and sour dishes, garlic and proper spaghetti ... not tinned!

By the time I returned to Renmark the soldier settlers were retiring. Their properties were being taken over by newcomers from Greece, Italy, the then Yugoslavia and others, who were not afraid of hard work.

Greek parents from Renmark North requested a preschool to help their children learn some English before starting school. I was asked to be their teacher. The whole school community supported us and I think I was there for about 15 years.

Over time the measure of ethnicities changed, so that we were enrolling children from Vietnam, India, the Pacific Islands and Turkey as well.

I got to know some of the families and found that they were generally friendly, generous and often had a great sense of humour. They were ambitious for their children ... they weren't very different to the rest of us.

When I retired I looked for something interesting to do and as more refugees and migrants arrived, I began to help with language classes at TAFE. I also went to the homes of women who were not able to come to class.

We had Afghanis, Iraqis, Iranians, Turks, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Chinese and Thais, even though I'm sure I've missed out some.

It was very humbling for me to see the efforts people made to get to class, or lessons, after a full day's work, when they were obviously tired. But they did it and learning English was difficult. English, I am told, has more words and a bigger vocabulary than any other language. We can say the same thing in many ways.

As those of you who know another language will understand, it is almost impossible to translate from one language to another, word for word. Of course the Australian version of English is even more of a challenge.

I remember two young women arriving in class on a Monday morning with a

query. "We went to Big W on Saturday and everyone kept asking us how we were going. Did they want us to leave? Or were they offering us a ride home? What should we have said?"

Our students, on the whole, were keen to learn all they could about this country. I asked one woman what she like about Australia, expecting her to say something about beaches, or the river.

She said "I love that Australians have laws and they actually obey them."

Some commentators I have read are suggesting that Australians are becoming a cautious people, that we are afraid of anything new or different ... that we don't like change. If that were true, it would be a great pity. Very few things stay exactly the same. Change is all around us. Although, of course, we need to consider which values and ideas we want to keep.

Multiculturalism isn't mentioned much these days. It's often thought of as being about eating different foods and watching ethnic dancing. That's a bit like tourism.

But the Renmark version of multiculturalism, that I know, is where we accept and help our neighbours, where we encourage the different ethnic groups to keep their mother tongues as well as to learn English as best they can, to celebrate their feast days, to bury their dead traditionally, but to be part of our wider community. To be Australian.

I was with a couple of my Turkish friends in a coffee shop when the attendant asked "where are you from?"

"Renmark", they replied.

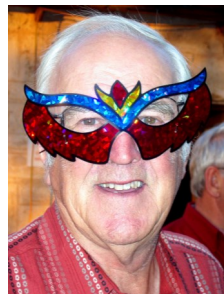
"No, where are you really from?"

"Renmark", they said.

Many people have helped me personally to get some understanding of our various communities—those

who showed me their embroideries, those who were patient when I clumsily put my foot in the wrong place, those who opened their photograph albums when we couldn't talk much and all the others who allowed me into their homes.

I still have a lot to learn but I feel proud of our town, that we have been able to grow into the diverse and interesting community that we are ... and are still becoming. I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to acknowledge that and thank you for giving me this opportunity to address your AGM.



He doesn't always look like this



As your President for 2023 I have enjoyed working with your committee to ensure that as many activities as possible were available for members to enjoy.

Philip Sims



KERRY BROUGHTON

This year I have taken on the role of Course Coordinator for U3A Riverland. Sure, that means less time for art, but the bonus is that I get to know more of you in U3A land. So, please feel free to approach me at any time ... I will be happy to hear your ideas and get to know you.

I am wife to Gary, mother to Eve, Dale and Patrick and grandmother to 11 of their children (8 boys and 3 girls). And yes, that number is a bit uneven, but they're delightful individuals. We love them all.

Gary and I are both retired Royal Australian Airforce members. Gary was also an Army member. We came to the Riverland in 2006 to be closer to our daughter who was living in Renmark. Later that year, we both joined the Paringa CFS as fire fighters. It was our way of participating in the community in which we had chosen to live.

We have lived in many places across Australia, but Renmark is home.

A huge A huge thank you to the 2023 committee together with our webmaster, Terry Marter, our caterer. Ute Young and Anna Harper for setting up our Facebook group. We have been very well supported with 157 financial members.

During the year our Secretary, Cheri Gray, was unable to continue and Marian Woodberry took 6 months leave from June. Daina Braddock and Di March kindly filled in for the remainder of the year. Thank you very much to both of you.

Marian has now retired from U3A and on behalf of everyone, we thank her for her 8½ years of commitment as President, Vice President and Publicity Officer. Marian was a founding committee member. Flowers and a thank you message have been sent to her.

During the year handrails were installed to the Sisters' Room exterior door and on the upper and lower door frames of the kitchen passageway door, as well as yellow hazard lines. A huge thank you to our two 'maintenance' committee members, Geoff March and Tony Guster.

A new smart TV has been installed – thank you to Geoff March for your research and installation in the Sister's room. Members can now access YouTube, zoom meetings, watch movies etc.

This year's thank you lunch for tutors was held in our clubrooms, and catered by Ute Young. Tutors were presented with a certificate of appreciation.

Afternoon tea, organized by Marian Woodberry, was provided to the JC's on the long weekend in June for the recovery of a time capsule as part of their 40th year reunion. The Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS) gave a presentation in our clubrooms. Thank you Marian for organizing.

The long-running Art Group ran a highly successful art exhibition during Rose Week which displayed the range of talent in this group... hopefully this will become an annual event

New Activities offered: a one off session of Sharpening Garden Tools was well attended. May be there is demand for another this year. We are always looking for short activities.

A Community Singing Group was offered in Term 2. It was popular and is running again this year. Thank you Marian for

your work in the organization of that activity.

As well as the long-running yoga sessions in Loxton, a Yoga Group commenced in Berri with Kaye Manning. It too proved so popular that a second group has been offered this year.

Of course none of these new activities, or our existing groups could be offered without the tireless efforts of our tutors. On behalf of our committee and all U3A members our heartfelt thanks to you all.

What's in the pipeline for 2024

Tony Guster, Shirley Sims and Anne Menzel have been working with a software package called Member Wizard which will enable members to enrol in classes online and renew their membership/update personal records themselves.

New name tags are now available for all members. Remember to add your "emergency contact" details to the back of your card and please wear them to all activities you attend.

Activities in the pipeline:

Croquet & Pickleball– U3A have supported the Berri Tennis Club in their quest to the Berri/Baramba Council for a Croquet court and a Pickleball Court. Hopefully these will be 2 new activities we can offer.

Cheese Making is another one we hope to offer this year.

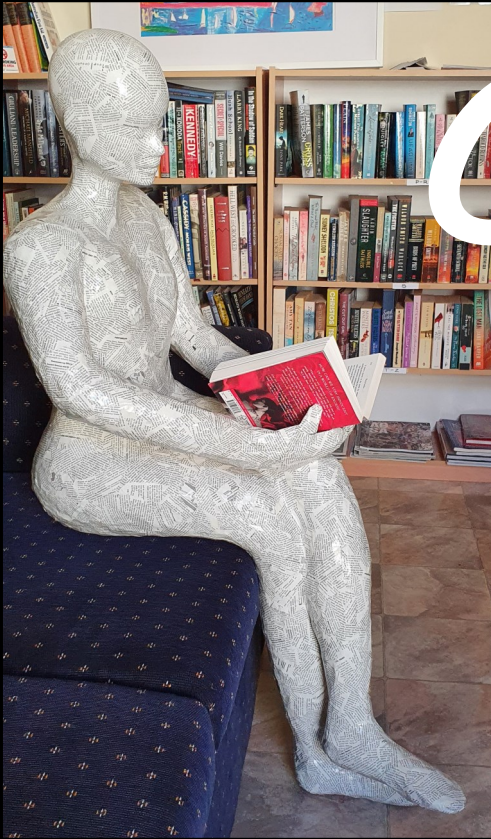
One of our newest members has offered to run a **Drumming** activity and Sound Healing.

Other suggestions that came from our Registration Day included activities such as Fruit Preserving, Sauce Making and Armchair Travel.

Other possibilities to consider are: Growing Herbs & Uses, Cooking (Greek, Italian, German) Walking Group, Coffee Group, Calligraphy, Play Reading, Wine Appreciation, Chess, Table Tennis, Darts, Board Games, Astronomy. There is an obvious need for some activities for men: A men's breakfast has been suggested.

The most exciting activity coming up in the next 12 months is our 10th anniversary celebrations

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to lead U3A Riverland this year and a huge thank you to the committee who have made my job easy.



Come and read with me

Hello, I'm Tilly

I didn't always look like this. I'm the figment of Diana March's imagination. She and Caryl Michael created me over a period of many months, as an art project. "Worse than giving birth" I heard them say.

I'm essentially made from chicken wire covered with a thick coat of papier-mâché. To refine my form they gave me curves. Did I mention that I had a breast augmentation ... and a lengthening of my waist?

They resorted to a volume of an encyclopaedia for my final skin ... letter "P" as it happens. So why didn't they call me Penelope instead of Tilly? I can understand why they avoided Prudence ... no offence ... but I'm a girl with attitude! Phoebe may have had a nice ring.

I take care of the library because I love reading. Come and sit with me sometime and we'll order a coffee while we have a chat.



10 books to make you laugh, cry and rejoice getting older

www.seniors.com.au

Reading a great book is one of life's great pleasures. In a world of omnipresent screens, it's easy to forget about the simple pleasure of curling up with a good book. It's also easy to forget about the massive benefits that come with reading that book. Science tells us that reading works wonders for our health.

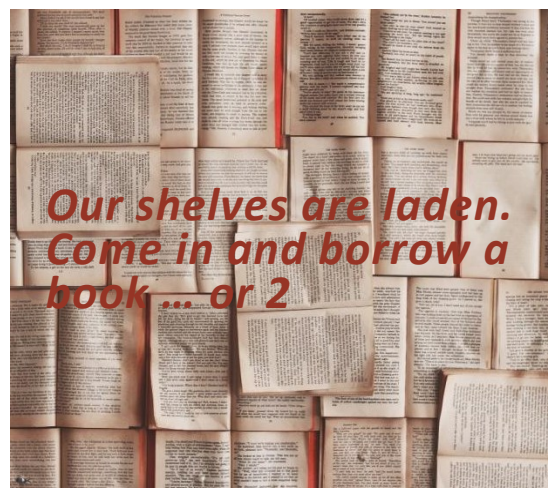
Stressed out? Reading can chill you out.

Scared you're losing your marbles? Reading can keep your brain sharp.

Worried about Alzheimer's disease? Reading can reduce the risk and effect.

Not sleeping well? Reading can help you sleep better.

So what are you waiting for? Pick up a book today and start reducing the effects of ageing.



***Our shelves are laden.
Come in and borrow a
book ... or 2***

1 All Passion Spent

Author: Vita Sackville-West

A literary fiction novel published in 1931, it is one of Vita Sackville-West's most popular works. In 1986, it was adapted into a 3 episode BBC television series.

Written in three parts, it is a charming and gentle novel that addresses how women control their own lives. The central character Lady Slane, is an 88-year old woman who, towards the end of her life, is emancipated by her husband's death. This leads her to new discoveries and realisations about her life.

2 Deaf Sentence

Author: David Lodge

Desmond Bates is a retired linguistics professor at a Midlands University and is finding that his later life is becoming stagnant and problematic. His wife is nipped, tucked and surgically reinvented, his father's health is in rapid decline, and a glamorous yet sinister American postgrad named Alex wants him to supervise her thesis about suicide notes.

Witty, original and absorbing, Deaf Sentence is a funny and moving account of coming to terms with deafness, ageing and mortality, as well as the comedy and tragedy of human lives.

3 Reinventing Myself

Author: Marlys Marshall Styne

Marlys Marshall Styne was retired seven years, widowed six years, childless, 73-years-old, and depressed. To find contentment, she began writing a series of personal essays which you can now read in Reinventing Myself. As you read, learn how to write your own essay that will make your quest to retired happiness that much easier.

4 Seize the Day

Author: Saul Bellow

This book is for people wanting to read a serious book that focuses on life's drama. A classic novel published in 1956, it inspires readers to look back on their life with gratitude and to make the most of every day that is still to come.

5 The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared

Author: Jonas Jonasson

Written by Swedish novelist Jonas Jonasson, this book is a laugh-aloud read about a man soon to celebrate his 100th birthday. His retirement home has planned him a party, but despite Allan being alert and agile for his age, he's not interested. Instead, he steps out of the window to find that an adventure (complete with drug dealers and police) awaits. As his adventure is told, so too is his life story – moments such as dinner with future President Harry S Truman, hitchhiking with Winston Churchill and travelling on a riverboat with the wife of Mao Zedong.

6 Park Ridge: A Senior Centre Murder

Author: Cheryl Hagedorn

A group of long-term pinocle players dare each other to commit murder to get rid of the pushy active members of the Park Ridge Senior Centre. Four murders and five different methods (including a banana) make a confusing recipe for Detective Stanley Nevins, whose mother also lives at the centre. Instead of "whodunit" this is a "whydunit" tale that successfully combines murders with romance and senior citizens with a suburban cowboy detective.

7 The Coroner's Lunch

Author: Colin Cotterill

The year is 1976 and Dr. Siri Paiboun, a 72-year-old medical doctor has been unwillingly appointed the national coroner of newly-socialist Laos. Confronted by the poisoning of an important official's wife and the sudden appearance of three bodies that may create an international incident between Laos and Vietnam, he must learn to keep his cool as he sets about on an exciting "whodunit" adventure. The Coroner's Lunch is an embarrassment of riches that sets off a darkly funny and exotic series, taking crime into the thick of political intrigue.

8 Curveball: The Year I Lost My Grip

Author: Jordan Sonnenblick

There's nothing All Star pitcher Peter Friedman loves more than baseball, so when a pitching accident ruins his arm, he's obviously devastated. To make matters worse, there's something going on with Pete's grandpa – he's acting weird and keeps forgetting important things. As hilarious as it is tragic, Jordan Sonnenblick shows that even when our world changes dramatically, you can still find beauty in it and you can always embrace the change.

9 Chicken Soup for the Golden Soul

Author: series of contributors

This wonderful collection of loving insights and wisdom all centred on the prime of life. Divided into chapters such as letting go, giving, learning, overcoming obstacles, perspective, believing, living your dream, reminiscing, and ageless wisdom, this book celebrates the joy that comes from having lived.

10 The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

Author: Rachel Joyce

A great book for seniors, this book tells the tale of a retired man on a quest to deliver a letter to his long-lost friend Queenie. It's a book about adventure, love, hope, transformation, and finding humour in old age. This national bestseller is a book almost all seniors can relate to.



Art for Beginners was one of the first activities offered when U3A Riverland began in 2015. Under the tutelage of trained art teacher Daina Braddock, this group has blossomed over the past 9 years. Other tutors have added to the range of activities offered and the art students are indebted to Daina, Bev Hartigan, Meredith Dunn, Ruth Pfeiler & Kate Yates for imparting their knowledge. Guest artists have also shared their skills (Phil Rosenthal, above, instructed the group in painting seascapes) and the talents of Sev Johnson blew everyone away. Sev's paper collages are not only spectacular, they are extremely complex and created exclusively with hand-torn paper (no scissors used)

A highly successful exhibition held in the clubrooms during Rose Festival showcased the amazing talent of this enthusiastic group who have achieved a level of confidence to display their works to the broader public.

The exhibition encompassed many different mediums including watercolours, acrylics, oils, pen and ink washes, mixed media, lino prints and covered a diversity of subjects, reflecting the uniqueness of the individuals who created them.



“Don't think about making art, just get it done. Let everyone else decide if it's good or bad, whether they love it or hate it. While they are deciding, make even more art ... Andy Warhol