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We're almost at our 10 year milestone ... who would have thought back in 2014, when U3A Riverland was formed, that we would engage so many local people in such a wide variety of learning and leisure activities. We are eternally grateful to the many volunteers who contribute their valuable time to be tutors or facilitators.

I regularly receive wonderful feedback about activities which members have participated in and am reminded of the new friendships that have formed as a result.

The Committee works hard to make our offerings as interesting as possible. Our thanks go to Jude Sykes who volunteered to fill the vacancy of Course Co-ordinator ... a crucial position in any U3A. New activities that began in Term 4 include: Understanding Artificial Intelligence, Croquet, Solving Rubik's Cube and Canasta. If you have any suggestions for an activity please let Jude or

anyone on the Committee know. I understand a number of interesting offerings are in the pipeline for 2025.

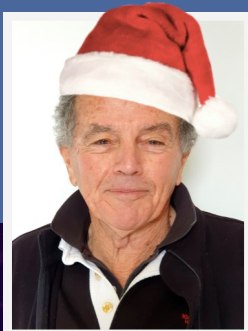
After many years as facilitator of Mahjong we thank Pam Rule for her enthusiasm and commitment to this activity. Pam, who was also Course Co-ordinator for a few terms, has relocated to Murray Bridge.

The art group held a highly successful exhibition at the Renmark Paringa Council during the Rose and Garden Festival and U3A Riverland was again represented at the Aged Care Expo, held in Loxton.

I draw your attention to the Christmas lunch detailed in the President's report and would like to wish you all a safe and happy festive season.

I encourage you to attend the AGM on Friday 7 March 2025 to help celebrate our 10th anniversary of operation.

**FROM THE
EDITOR**
Diana March



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Tony Guster



As it draws to a close, it's time to reflect on what has been a successful year, though a rather tense one at times. Well done to the leaders of, and participants in, those longstanding, established courses and activities that continued to thrive and develop throughout the year. Given all the interruptions and commitments built into our seniors' lives, we do well when we keep our courses and activities operating as we have, to the satisfaction of our members.

Essential to our success is the continued effort to add to, and improve our course and activity offerings. I believe that our healthy membership situation is due, in part, to the fact that we have succeeded in adding new items to our menu. Thank you to all of those who worked to get these new activities going.

Please remember that it's not just the job of the Course Coordinators but, rather, an expectation of each member, to be alert for possibilities and to draw them to the attention of the committee for further development.

Again, our artists displayed their impressive skills in a first-class exhibition during the Rose and Garden Festival. To display your work in public must take a good deal of personal courage, with the reward being, surely, an extra layer of personal artistic satisfaction. A number of the artists were able to sell some of their work, which is most gratifying.

The event afforded great publicity to our organisation and Kate Yates and her helpers handed out plenty of brochures publicising U3A.

It seems ages ago, but at our committee meeting on the 14th of October we were advised that we'd need to vacate half of our premises: the Sisters' room, office, library and kitchen.

A working bee on the 15th October resulted in our equipment and furniture being moved to the large main room and billiards room. Thanks to members who helped and to council officers who pitched in with furniture-shifting muscle, key re-organisation and arrangement for the re-siting of the air conditioning unit.

(Continued on page 4)

Committee Members ...



Would you trust
this person with
your finances?

What about this
one?



*We do ... she's been our Treasurer for
almost 10 years*



My passion for learning began early ... on the school bus ... where I was the instigator of playing 'schools' to pass the time. Of course I was always the 'teacher'.

My first teaching appointment was to Mount Gambier High School, after which I was transferred to Renmark. Having never been to the Riverland, I thought of this posting as a 'come and look' idea with the intention of moving on. 56 years later, with 3 children and 7 grandchildren, Philip and I live on a block now planted with pistachio trees – to my delight, not a fruit tree or vine in sight.

The Riverland heat was a huge contrast to my childhood, living in the cold, damp and wet South East on a dairy farm on Wild Dog Valley Road. Where is Wild Dog Valley Road, you may ask. I'm sure many of you have driven past the sign as you travel to Naracoorte from Bordertown (and not a dog in sight). Unfortunately it has now been renamed Johnson Road ... how boring!

I have participated in a number of U3A activities over the years including Yoga, Snapfish, Singing, Yeast Cookery, Wine Tasting, Magic Tricks, and Bike Riding. I briefly attended Art where I spent more time watching others paint, talking and looking forward to the coffee break than producing any art. But it was fun. I met lots of members and realized the huge impact and importance of U3A to so many of our retirees. There is just one more activity I'm waiting for – tap dancing! Is there a volunteer instructor out there somewhere?

Away from U3A, I am an active member of St Augustine's Church in Renmark, the Parish of the Riverland, Parkrun and I'm involved with grandchildren's activities when I can. Although I have lived on a block for many years, there has never been any time for actual 'block work' for me ... it's just not in my DNA!

It's hard to believe that on 2nd December 2024 it will be 10 years since U3A Riverland was formed. Our steering committee of Di March, Lyn Harvey, Daina Braddock and I began putting things in place in 2014.

As a newly retired lecturer of TAFE in Business Studies (Accounting) I was duly nominated Treasurer and have been in this position for almost 10 years.

TREASURER
SHIRLEY SIMS

Having grown up on my parents' fruit block in Winkie and spending four years in Adelaide for education, I made the big move to Berri where I lived for a number of years before returning to Winkie in 1985.

My employment began at Berri Co-operative Packing Union, followed by Rivergrowers and then Berri Co-operative Winery. I finished with 23 years at TAFE in Berri. All of my positions were clerical and administration, so it is not surprising that I have taken on committee and leadership roles in the many clubs of which I have been a member ... including U3A.

It was in Winkie that my late husband John and I raised our two sons and started our dahlia growing venture. After growing thousands of dahlias over many years, John, and I by association, became very well known in the dahlia world. This resulted in several trips overseas and many thousands of kilometres in Australia to visit dahlia growers and to attend dahlia shows. It was very rewarding and resulted in many long term friendships.

I still grow dahlias but certainly not in the

quantities or with the same skill and dedication which John possessed.

I am very fortunate that my two granddaughters live close to me and I spend many happy hours with them and my son and daughter-in-law.

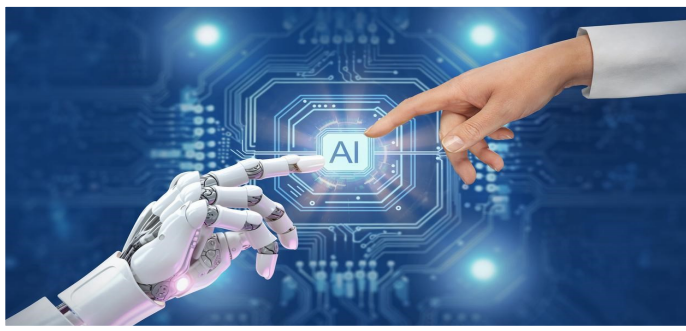
My other son lives in Melbourne where he and his partner foster greyhound dogs that are being prepared for life after racing. This gives me reason to travel to Melbourne to visit them. They challenged me to crochet a winter jacket for their foster dog, Buddy, which I managed to achieve.

I joined U3A about seven years ago when I was invited to attend the newly formed Knitting & Crochet group. I am now a regular attendee, together with Mahjong and Cryptic Crosswords groups. I have also attended several short term or one day activities.

Since joining U3A I have met so many interesting people and become good friends with many that I would never have met without U3A. Thank you U3A for expanding my horizons and helping me to stay active and productive in my community.



COURSE ADMIN
ANNE MENZEL



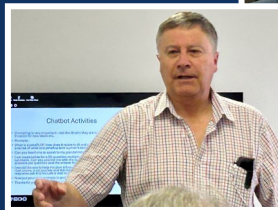
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI refers to computer systems capable of performing complex tasks that historically only a human could do; such as reasoning, making decisions, or solving problems.

run by Mark Bell on Monday afternoons. Rather than being afraid of what this technology might do, participants have embraced learning how it may benefit them and for what purposes it may be used. Some applications that people have researched include writing prose or poetry, creating graphical images, developing a travel plan and creating puzzles or quizzes. The lightning fast responses to posed questions have impressed everyone and I personally cannot fathom the technology it requires to produce something so quickly. Of course not everything one reads is accurate and so an ounce of caution is required.

However, it's certainly a fascinating technology, the use of which is growing exponentially.

If you're interested in finding out more, please contact Mark Bell about joining the group.



When was the last time you caught yourself singing in the shower or singing along to a song on the radio? What about humming a tune that gets stuck in your head?

Not only does singing help boost your immune system, it also makes you feel happier and uplifted. Singing is known to release endorphins, the brain's "feel good" chemicals. There is also growing evidence showing that people feel more positive after actively singing comparing to passively listening to music. Mood change comes directly from the release of positive brain chemicals such as β -endorphin, dopamine and serotonin. It also releases anti-stress hormones called oxytocin which can reduce anxiety.

You know the tune ... "My Favourite Things"
Maybe you don't know these words but don't let that stop you from giving your lungs a workout

Seniors' Version ...

Maalox and nose drops and needles for knitting
 Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings
 Bundles of magazines tied up with string
 These are a few of my favourite things

Gophers and cataracts and those seniors' passes
 Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses
 Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings
 These are a few of my favourite things

When the pipes leak, when the bones creak
 When the knees go bad
 I simply remember my favourite things
 And then I don't feel so bad

Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions
 Less spicy hot foods laden with onions
 Bathrobes and heat pads and even gin slings
 These are a few of my favourite things

Back pains, confused brains and no fear of sinning
 Weak bones and fractures and hair that is thinning
 We won't even mention our much-shrivelled skins
 When we remember our favourite things

When the joints ache, when the hips break
 When the eyes grow dim
 When I remember the great life I've had
 Then I don't feel so bad

The singing group meets 4-5pm on Wednesdays. If you love to sing why don't you come along. Give Jill Harris a call on 0467 010 814 to check details.

(Continued from page 1)

We conducted a second well-attended working bee on November 13 and now have the main room and billiards ready for use. We have re-organised and trimmed down our facilities and await the removal of the full-sized snooker table to free up more space. With a tidy up of our "office corner" we should be back on deck, much as before.

Special thanks go to Geoff March for all the work that he has done in setting up the reorganised rooms with audio visual, IT and general fittings. His work is priceless to us.

Putting the finishing touches to our move 'downstairs' will be a continuing process. Members have shown that they are willing to negotiate generously in managing shared use of facilities.

It is still important to keep up the search for future venues (or for future partnerships in venues) to move to when, eventually, we must completely vacate our current premises. In this, we will seek the Berri Barmera Council's support, but much of the initiative must be ours.

We plan to incorporate a celebration of our 10 years of operation into next year's AGM. This will be held on Friday March 7, 2025 at 10.00 am in the Len Mahony Room of the Berri Town Hall, (the venue of our public meeting all those years ago). In looking back over the years in reminiscence we would like to incorporate the memories of those of you who were involved in key moments of our history. Please help if you are requested to contribute.

Our tireless Treasurer, Shirley Sims, has recently circulated messages notifying you of the 2025 membership fees and of how you might go about paying for them. We ask that if you are enrolling in an activity that recommences in early January, you pay for your membership before the end of 2024.

Because we are not quite ready for its full utilization, we will not, this term, be offering 2025 membership renewal facilities through our online Member Wizard management programme. Instead, we will conduct our membership payments process as before. We will fully develop Member Wizard for U3A Riverland during next year with an eye to opening up its benefits to you during the year.

We'd love to see you at our Christmas luncheon:
Thursday December 12

Berri Hotel Bistro at 12.00 noon

Please text, call or email me if you planning on attending.

Mobile 0447 781 820

Email tonyguster@gmail.com

In closing, I extend to you on behalf of the U3A Riverland Committee best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

We hope to see you back with U3A, enjoying the 2025 activities that we have to offer.

To keep in touch please check out our web page: <https://www.u3ariverland.org> and our U3A Riverland Facebook page.



Working Bee

Thank
you
so
much

to the many members who came to help at the working bee held on Wednesday 13 November. We have managed to reorganise the 2 large rooms that we now have at our disposal in the clubrooms.

The bar has become a functioning kitchen, the art group has retained a huge storage space and the library has found a new home in the lower billiards room ... where Tilly continues to "loungue". The office has also been relocated to the lower room and we should once again be able to function as per usual. Once the full-size snooker/billiard

table has been removed, we will have a very large usable space.

Clearly there will be a need for each activity to keep the area tidy. Coffee & tea drinkers, who can make a cuppa in the "kitchen", are asked to wash and dry their cups/crockery & cutlery and put them away. The sink area is small so please DO NOT leave your cups draining on the sink and expect somebody else to tidy up.



OUT & about



Exercise *your* Brain



Brain games are important for several reasons:

- * They can help to increase focus, concentration and memory
- * They can help us to be more present in day-to-day activities
- * While it doesn't appear that brain games can prevent age-related cognitive decline and dementia, growing research indicates that they may slow or delay them.

It's important to note that the game you choose needs to constantly increase in challenge and variety. If you're only playing the same thing over and over again, the mind isn't challenged anymore and begins to run on autopilot.

Besides brain games, another way to challenge your brain is simply by varying your regular routines or tasks. For example, if you take your dog for a walk on the same route every day, try going in a different direction one day.

You'll also want to challenge both sides of your brain.

The left brain is known to perform tasks related to logic, such as science and mathematics, whereas the right brain is more visual and intuitive. Games like Sudoku and puzzles are great for challenging the left side of the brain.

On the other hand, to strengthen the right side of your brain, you'll want to "keep your emotional intelligence sharp by engaging in conversations where you evoke and attune to the emotions of others.

You can also try new creative hobbies such as: painting, photography, creative writing, playing music or learning to play an instrument.

SCRABBLE

As well as bringing out the competitive spirit, this classic word game works to enrich your vocabulary and train your mind to focus on a sole task. With an entire dictionary of words to choose from, every round is different, and you'll never tire of playing this game. It's been around since 1948.

RUMMICUB

This easy-to-learn, fast-moving game combines both luck and strategy. Players take turns placing numbered tiles in runs and groups, rummy style. As the board changes, players constantly adjust their tiles until every tile on their rack is gone. Rummikub may help sharpen your sequencing, pattern recognition, and planning skills.

CROSSWORD PUZZLES

A classic brain teaser that challenges vocabulary, spelling and general trivia knowledge. Puzzles come in various difficulty levels. This brain activity helps you improve your verbal skills, and forces you to think deeply.

RUBIK'S CUBE

As the world's best selling and most famous puzzle, the classic Rubik's cube has approximately 43 quintillion (43,252,003,274,489,856,000) combinations. This portable game is perfect for stimulating the brain during idle time. Rather than scrolling through social media or watching television, try your mind at solving the cube. (Be warned: It's harder than it looks.)

SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number puzzle where you have to fill a grid with numbers 1 through 9, with each number appearing only once in a row, column, or box. This classic game makes you think critically. Sudoku is not a puzzle for guessing numbers ... you need to count and analyze the arrangement of numbers.

JIGSAW PUZZLES

Jigsaw puzzles are great because they exercise both the left and right sides of your brain at once. Puzzles require both logic, intuition, and creativity *and* it's easy to get lost for hours working on them.

FUN FACT!

THE FIRST JIGSAW PUZZLES were made in 1760 BY BERKSHIRE MAP-MAKER JOHN SPILSBURY.

THEY were maps OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE CUT IN PIECES.

- **Word search:** Test vocabulary and improve scanning skills by finding hidden words listed in various directions within a grid of letters.
- **Chess:** A strategy game for two players that challenges planning, problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- **Checkers:** simpler strategy board game than chess, but still requires planning and critical thinking.
- **Dominoes:** A tile-based game where players try to score points by matching the ends of their dominoes with those already played. Many variations exist, but all are fun.
- **Bingo:** A classic game of chance perfect for large groups. Players mark off numbers on their cards as a caller calls them out. The first player to mark off all the numbers wins.
- **Cards:** Many different card games can be enjoyed by groups, such as bridge, canasta and euchre. These games are great for socialising, having fun and improving cognitive skills like memory and concentration.
- **Trivial pursuit:** A board game that tests players' knowledge of various topics. Players move around the board by answering trivia questions correctly. The first player to collect all six wedges and answer a final question correctly wins.