



Benalla and District Inc.

## Newsletter – October 2020

U3A Benalla & District Inc

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### President's Report

Here we are in October 2020, the year we could never have expected.

I need to look at the positives, having the time to pack up the house and get ready to move. Also, the time to help clear out my sister's unit. Barbara is now living in Echuca.

Like many of you, I've missed seeing my family. I'm very grateful for my friends in Benalla, and it's been great when we have been able to meet for a coffee or lunch.

As a Committee we are keeping in touch with the Council and you will hear any news when we do.

Stay positive!

Dorothy Webber, President

### 'Meet and Mingle' over morning tea in the Benalla Gardens!

A chance for U3A participants to catch up with friends in the beautiful gardens next to the Art Gallery!

Wednesday 21 October from 10.00 to 11.30 am.

'BYO' morning tea; tea/coffee/beverages, cups, chair, cushion.

Covid-19 regulations and weather permitting!

RSVP Heather Wallace on 0418 353 244 by Monday 19 October

### Creative Writing

*The Creative Writing group respond to prompts set each month. This month we feature a heart-warming story written by Sally Hann in response to the prompt 'still, the woman approached'...*

Jessie saw at the pleading look in Toby's dark eyes and said "O.K., one more" picking up the dog's slobbery stick and threw it as far as she could watching Toby run delightedly after it, retrieving it and dropping it at her feet, tail wagging. She plumped down on the park bench, Toby sitting beside her, his head resting on her knee and she absentmindedly stroked his silky ears.

As she sat **still, the woman approached**. "That's a nice dog" the woman said conversationally.

Always happy to hear praise of her beloved pet, Jessie smiled. "Thank you" she said. "He is very special".

"What is his breed?" the woman asked, to which Jessie replied "He is a breed of his own, a bit like the chicken dance you know - a little bit of this and a little bit of that."

"May I pat him?" to which Jessie replied "Of course" and the woman leaned over and patted Toby on the head to be rewarded with a tentative lick.

"He loves to come to the park and chase sticks" said Jessie. Then she laughed "I get tired of that game long before he does," she said.

They sat in silence for a while then the woman blurted out "It's lovely to talk to somebody. I moved here a month ago and find it very lonely."

"Oh, you poor thing," said Jessie, "what made you move here?"

"Well John, my husband, died 10 months ago and our daughter suggested I move here to be closer to her. It seemed such a good idea at the time, but she works so I don't see much of her and my grandchildren are all away at university, so I don't see them either. I should have just stayed where I was. At least I had friends there," the woman said.

"Do you have any hobbies? How about joining a group?" asked Jessie.

"I wouldn't know where to start" the woman replied sadly. "I find it very hard to make friends."

Jessie wrinkled her nose in thought. "Well," she said at last, "I belong to U3A which is wonderful. It has all sorts of courses, singing, a collectors' group, bushwalking, writing, oh heaps of interesting stuff. It's a great way to meet new people with similar interests to you. Tell you what, why don't you come to my house, we'll have a coffee and I can show you the programme."

The woman's face lighted up at the kind offer. "Why that would be great, if you wouldn't mind."

"Of course not. I wouldn't have offered if I didn't mean it. By the way I'm Jessie and this is Toby," said Jessie bending down to pat the patient dog.

They stood up and started to walk towards the street. "I'm Angela," offered the woman.

Back at Jessie's home, whilst the kettle was boiling Jessie hunted up the programme and handed it to Angela. "There are lots of things to do on Wednesday but sadly that is my badminton day and I couldn't miss that," said Jessie.

"Badminton!" exclaimed Angela, "I used to play that too."

"Well why don't you come along," said Jessie, "we are always looking for new players and it's lots of fun, we don't play for sheep stations or anything like that, just hit and giggle. We have a coffee and chat afterwards and when one of our group has a birthday, we go out for lunch to celebrate."

"Wow," said Angela, "I'm so glad I plucked up the courage to talk to you. There is light at the end of the tunnel after all."

Sally Hann

## Group Reports

### 'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

Last month's topic, ['Right Here, Right Now'](#), proved popular, with 10 stories added to the collection on our web page. Judy Perry's 'Right Here, Right Now' story has been included in the newsletter this month as part of 'Covid Musings' – it will almost certainly resonate with U3A members who attend the Covid-19 socially distanced early morning exercise classes in the car park of the Recreation Centre in Ackerly Avenue.

Stories for late September's topic, ['Out of the Blue'](#), by Elizabeth Kearns, Bev Morton, Margaret Nelson, Judy Perry, Ray O'Shannessy and Joy Shirley are now on the website.

In October we usually write on the topic set for the annual Benalla Festival Writing Competition. With the Festival being cancelled this year, we are trying something different. The October theme is **"This Life"**. The aim is to submit a 500-word story of your choice, a story important to you, a story you have often wanted to write about. After writing the story, develop a title for it using the title "This (.....) Life". Drawing on titles submitted to the Weekend Australian newspaper's 'This Life' story column, it might be something like, "This (inspiring) Life", "This (entitled) Life", "This (serendipitous) Life" or 'This (downsizing) Life'. A recent story published in the Australian was titled - 'This (Number 8) Life' - a story about growing up as 'Number 8' in a family of nine children. If you have difficulty titling your story, submit it anyway and we'll come up with a suggestion for you to consider.

Bev Lee

## Bird Watching

### U3A Birdwatching outing Thursday 8 October 2020

After a 2 month COVID shut down, it will be good to meet up for another birdwatching activity on Thursday morning 8 October. It was originally planned for August and can now proceed with a **limit of 10 participants**. We will visit the southern section of the Warby Ranges off Taminick Gap Road, just north of Glenrowan. Please meet in Glenrowan at 9.30am at the car park near the public toilets in the main street (Gladstone St). As usual bring any food and water you need for the morning, and binoculars if you have them.

We will be walking along Ridge Track, which leads to a communication tower and has wonderful views of the surrounding area. We should see some lovely spring wildflowers, and with a bit of luck maybe a Turquoise Parrot or two.

Please book with me by 6pm on Wednesday 7 October if you would like to attend. If anyone wants to drive direct to the Ridge Track carpark on Taminick Gap Road, please advise me when you book. Ph 5762 5755, Mobile 0447 625755, email [coskoy@bigpond.com](mailto:coskoy@bigpond.com)

Kathy Costello

## Bushwalking

### Easy Walks



#### Wednesday 7 October: Warby-Ovens National Park - Friends Track

With the lifting of some of the COVID-19 restrictions, walks will recommence on Wednesday, 7 October 2020 whilst adhering to the appropriate COVID-19 protocols.

We will walk along part of the changing landscape of The Friends Track, passing by spectacular spring wildflowers; a stand of iconic Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoea*) and through forested granite hills. This track is undulating; rocky in parts and could be wet; therefore, sturdy footwear and walking poles/stick (for some members) would be appropriate. Distance 5 - 6 kms, slow walking at times as there is a lot to see. Currently, COVID-Safe regulation allow 10 people at outdoor activities; we will take two groups of 10 (maximum 20 members). BYO lunch and chair or groundsheet.

Participants, please contact Margaret Walshe Ph: 57623906/0427005202 or [mwalshe20@gmail.com](mailto:mwalshe20@gmail.com) by Monday, 5 October 2020. Meet at the Seniors/U3A car park, Fawcner Drive, Benalla, 9.45am for 10am departure. For further information on this interesting area, Safari/Google, Warby-Ovens National Park.

Margaret Walshe

#### Wednesday 21 October: Eldorado – from the historic dredge to town and more

On Wednesday 21st October it is proposed to conduct a walk in El Dorado, weather and COVID restrictions permitting. It is proposed to walk from the old historic dredge to the main part of the town near the museum. It may be possible to organise a lunch for the group at Victoria's smallest pub before completing nearby Reid's walk to the swing bridge. Please meet behind the Senior Citizen's centre at 9.30am.

If any of these plans change, we will contact you before the day. On the day group numbers could still be limited to 10 but we may be able to organise two groups. Please notify me on 0403226649 or [wendes47@bigpond.com](mailto:wendes47@bigpond.com) if you wish to come.



Wendy Sturgess



#### Wednesday 4 November: Myrtleford - Ovens River Scenic Trail; Myrtleford Historic Walk and the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail.

Myrtleford, nestled in the Ovens Valley with Mt Buffalo providing a dramatic backdrop, offers many interesting places to visit. Julie McNeill will take us on these diverse walks with something of interest to all walkers and abilities. The Ovens River Trail, also known as Myrtleford's Mosaic Trail, is a treasure cove of hidden art! This sealed path closely follows the Ovens River

between Rotary and Apex Parks, passes through native bush and crosses the river twice. The Township Walk of Discovery, highlights the significant historical aspect of Myrtleford's fascinating life ... settlement, war and industries. The Murray to Mountain Rail Trail - an opportunity to walk a section of this 95km trail that goes through the town!

We will be observing the relevant COVID-19 Protocols. Participants please contact Margaret Walshe Ph: 57623906/0427005202 or mwalshe20@gmail.com by Monday, 2 November 2020. Meet at the Seniors/ U3A car park, Fawcner Drive, Benalla, 9.15am for 9.30am departure.

Margaret Walshe

### Mid Week Walks

Midweek walks are up and running again, held under current restriction rules. Let's get back on the track. Walks for October and November below.

#### **WED 14 OCTOBER, 2020      CARTERS CREEK      S-3-3**

An easy walk up from Carter's Road, near Sawmill settlement and back down Plain Creek track.

Meet 8.30 am at the Tennis Courts Barkly St (behind Aldi). Leave 8.45 am. Alternatively meet at Mansfield Toilet block, once in Mansfield cnr Highett & High Street at 9.30 am

**Leader: Gwenda Tait: 57787242**

#### **WED 11 NOVEMBER, 2020      MT TIMBERTOP      S-4-3**

The walk begins at the car park and follows a narrow path up to the summit. There are spectacular views of the Victorian Alps and the Delatite Valley.

Meet 9.15 am Leave Benalla 9.30 am

**Leader: Helen Spinks. Phone 0488 013 059**

John Boehm

### Collectors

Carlton Ware is very popular among members of our Collectors group.

Carlton Ware's earliest range was Blush Ware, transfer printed or hand-painted floral designs on pastel backgrounds. Throughout the decades, Carlton Ware has been inspired by many themes, including blue and white, museum artefacts, coats of arms, military vehicles, suffragettes, Asian and Egyptian scenes, hollyhocks, foxgloves and violets, the colors of rouge, vert, noir and bleu, advertising for companies such as Guinness and, the more modern 'walking ware' featuring little feet.

Lesser known facts in Carlton Ware history are the two tragedies which befell the Wiltshire family which owned the company.

One of the founding owners, James Wiltshire was killed in a dreadful railway station accident, leaving Carlton Ware to his son Frederick Cuthbert.

In 1952, Frederick's wife was brutally murdered in their home. She was beaten to death with a poker during a robbery and the police pinned her murder to Leslie Green, who was subsequently hung. Leslie was a former chauffeur to the family, sacked two months prior to the robbery for using a car for his own purposes.



Three thousand pounds worth of jewellery was stolen in the robbery. Police found Green had given rings to his girlfriend that matched stolen items. His shoes matched bloody

footprints left at the scene of the murder and he had a recently healed cut on the thumb of his left hand which perfectly matched a tear in blood stained gloves also left behind.

The pictured bowl and serving plate are treasured pieces of Carlton Ware, handed down by my late grandmother.



Jacquie Schwind

## Creative Writing

Our Creative Writing class has continued with members selecting from a list of topics to write a story and then share with the class. After reading the stories, the members are providing feedback to the authors.

The topics for our September class were:

- **I have already set down the details of some of the most notorious things we did.**
- **There were other victories**
- **Still, the woman approached**

Some great stories this month with class members able to think outside the box. A story about victories covered removal of weeds from the garden, although the battle to remove oxalis was ongoing, with new fronts appearing – interesting use of battle terminology in the fight against the weeds. Another class member placed a comma after “still”, changing the meaning of the phrase. One common theme was around social issues, giving pause for thought. They included loneliness, homelessness and corruption, but the writers added positive aspects to these stories. For example, loneliness was addressed when a new arrival in town met someone who introduced her to U3A and badminton.

Our next class is scheduled for **12 October** with a choice between the following topics (contributed by one of the class members):

- **He pushed on, his head and shoulders bent against the unforgiving wind.**
- **She sat in silence waiting for the impending knock at the door.**
- **The tall figure emerged from the shadows.**

We will continue to share our stories and feedback via email. If anyone else would like to write on any of these topics, please send them to me at [jshirley@internode.on.net](mailto:jshirley@internode.on.net) and I will forward to the class, and also share the stories from the class with you.

Joy Shirley

## Demystifying Psychology



As expected, September has been curious. We discussed theories and analyses of the psychological profile of President Donald Trump, his brand of leadership, family background, who voted for him and why, and his economic report card. The aim was a balanced investigation, hence the two photos. The first was used for Trump's election promo.

Here is what we discussed. The numbers in brackets are references. Email me for the list which is too long for here.

- 1) And in the beginning ..... the President was aptly named. “Donald” comes from the Proto-Celtic Dumno-ualos ("world-ruler" or "world-wielder"). Who knew what at his birth?

### Psychological profile and leadership:

- 2) In part, Trump marketed himself as a “Republican .... that is not simply a vehicle for the already extraordinarily rich to increase their wealth and power”. This destabilized the Republican Party and endeared poorer Americans to Donald. (1)
- 3) “The US has spun from facing a fake migrant invasion, to a blue-wave election, to an attack on that election by the president.” “All of America is paddling.” (2)
- 4) “Critics tend to fall along a spectrum ... an absurd figure ...” or a talented bully. (3) Both equally absurd.
- 5) Psychological descriptors include narcissism, disagreeableness, grandiosity, gaslighting, authoritarianism and fascism, lack of concern for other's wishes and/or opinions, and misogyny. (4)
- 6) Trump uses “Shock Politics” to distract. There are ways to resist this. (5)



## The Family Trump:



7) The President's father Fred was a first generation American. His mother Mary migrated from Scotland. His father has been variously described as a "high functioning sociopath", a fiercely bold man, encouraging his son to emerge as a "killer" or "king" in negotiations, and suffocating and destructive. Trumps frequently unwell mother was physically and/or emotionally absent, neglected her children and is said to have influenced his hairdo (true!). (6). The irony of this heritage in the context of the Mexican Wall diatribe cannot be ignored.

8) Trump was attuned to pleasing his father. His fathers' photo was displayed in the Oval Office many months before his mothers' photo emerged.



9) His relationship with his mother is said to be the genesis of Trump's contempt for women. But I suspect Fred made a rather good contribution as well. Sigmund Freud's theories are handy here.

## So ... who voted for Trump and why:

10) Many voters were very unhappy with progressives/liberals/Clinton and did not expect Trump to get in. Voting for Trump was a protest vote and with wide-ranging rationales. Many voters came from the professions, from the military or from government service and are described as well-informed and patriotic Americans who were desperate for change. (7)



## How does the report card look?

11) Trump's pre-covid economic achievements were not as singularly and historically phenomenal as he insisted. However, one analysis of economic growth, the stock market, and jobs and wages concluded "it's true the economy has been doing well - but there have been periods when it was even stronger." (8) An "average" for Donald. Fred would NOT be pleased.

It's a strange, strange world we live in Master Jack.

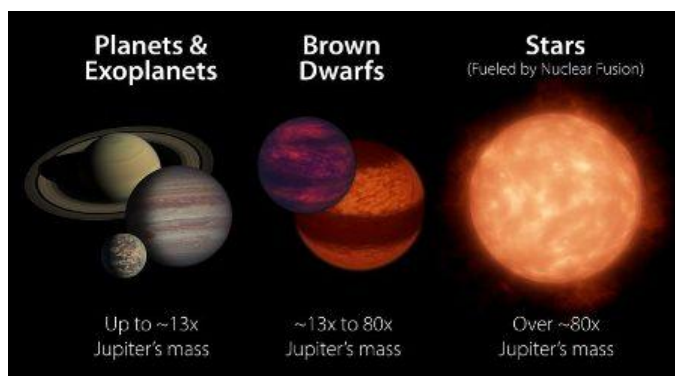
Jane Rushworth

## Exploring the Universe

### Star Evolution: 'A star becomes a giant nuclear reactor.'

At our last 'Exploring the Universe' in March, Neville asked a question on the evolution of Stars. "How much bigger than Planet Jupiter does a developing solar object have to be before it could ignite into a star?" I said we would find out and here is the answer.

It's all a question of mass. Jupiter has approximately 317 times more mass than Earth. Stars need to have over 80x of Jupiter's mass to survive. But there are other players in the field; the Brown Dwarfs!



With evidence from the world's largest observatories and in-space telescopes, this is the current theory, briefly:

Within space there is cool diffused gas and dust that when disturbed by a shock wave, come together to form giant molecular clouds. Supersonic turbulence within the clouds leads them to collapse under pressure from immense gravity and produce the heat and energy for star formation.

A **Star** evolves within the collapsing gravity of the

cloud. A disk of gas and dust encircles the young **protostar**. The star feeds on the gaseous material from the disk and the star's core eventually becomes hot enough to produce the energy to fuse hydrogen into helium and ignite thermonuclear fusion. The remaining gas is blasted away. This takes around a million years.

**Brown Dwarfs** are defined as being within a range greater than 13x and less than 80x Jupiter masses. More massive than planets they have stronger gravity and have accumulated material like a star, but have not collected enough gas to create nuclear fusion. Of varying temperatures they eventually dim out and can be found orbiting other stars or each other or just drifting through space. Brown dwarfs are hard to detect and it is thought that they may account for some of the missing mass in the Universe. These are the failed stars.

**Planets** form from the leftovers of star formation by coalescing micro grains of dust within the surrounding disk. They form with less mass than stars so have a weaker gravity and don't attract the lighter elements of hydrogen and helium. The young planet generates heat from collisions with asteroids and accretion with space leftovers but does not have the elements or energy for nuclear fusion.

There is a common misconception that some giant gas planets are failed stars. So where do gas planets get their gas from? More on this later.

Bev Morton

## Film as Literature

We watched another wide range of films during September. I have included the ratings that members of the group have given for the films. Of course, different people enjoy different genres and actors, so I expect many may not agree with the ratings.

**The Shawshank Redemption (1994):** Set in a male prison, run by a corrupt warden, sadistic guards and some predatory inmates. Rated as 4/5.

**Bed Among the Lentils:** an Alan Bennett monologue starring the incomparable Maggie Smith. Rated as 4+/5

**Still Alice (2014):** The story of a highly intelligent university lecturer's descent into Alzheimer's Disease and the impacts it had on her family. Rated as 2/5.

**Foyle's War (Series 1, episode 3, 2002):** An episode of the series set during WWII, involving Detective Chief Inspector Foyle, aided by his Sergeant, Paul Milner, and his driver, Samantha Stewart.

**Carrie (1952):** A melodrama from the 1950s starring Laurence Olivier and Jennifer Jones. A bit of nostalgia with plenty of twists and turns. Rated as 3/5.

**Three Pines (2013):** Based on a book, Gamache and his loyal inspector Jean-Guy Beauvoir investigate the murder of a much-loved retired schoolteacher. Rated as 3/5.

**Stan and Ollie (2018):** a fictionalised biography of the comedy partnership of Stan Laurel & Oliver Hardy which started in 1927. Rated as 2+/5.

**Colossal (2017):** It is a sci-fi fantasy about Gloria (Anne Hathaway) who moves back to her hometown after a relationship breakdown/job loss.

**The One and Only Ivan (2020):** An animated film based on best-selling author Katherine Applegate's award-winning 2013 book about Ivan, the headline act at a mall-based circus run by ringmaster Mack. Rated as 4/5

We are continuing with this approach for the class as the group is enjoying the variety of films and comments. We would welcome anyone who wishes to participate by sharing thoughts about films they have watched and interested in hearing comments about films others have watched. You can send me a message on [jshirley@internode.on.net](mailto:jshirley@internode.on.net). Contributions are due by 14 October for our next "class".

Joy Shirley

## Garden Appreciation



Benalla Gardens are looking beautiful, roses and trees back in leaf and the last of the flowering cherries and crab apples are putting on a show. Shirley Kearney and I were walking past the new Splash Park and had to stop to look it over. Loved the big red poppies, families will have lots of fun there.



Three ducks happened to be in the Lake waiting to have their photo taken.

I have been gardening around the Church garden with Chris, have started a new garden in front of the Parish Centre (Old Court House) just with plants from my garden with the help of some Magpies. Hope you have time to visit family and friends. Happy gardening!

Gwen Turner

## German – Conversation

The German language group are indebted to Horst for his enthusiastic leadership over winter. After re-planning and delivering a second programme for remote learning, Janet and I were indeed grateful for a break, even though our original reasons for unavailability were no longer relevant.

We are glad Horst enjoyed re-visiting his native tongue so much.

Janet had a good response for a third request for written contributions of our personal experiences of isolation under coronavirus restrictions early in the month.

As we are still unable to meet, Horst is continuing with his instruction into September.

Pauline Bailey

## Investment

The weather may be warming up but the Seniors Complex remains closed and our Zoom Investment meetings continue. 2020 has certainly been a unique year coping with COVID's first and second waves, and we sincerely hope that 2021 is quite different.

Whilst there has been a period in the first half of September where the Australian market retreated slightly, economic reality and the market have yet to come together. Government support through the shutdown period has benefited many companies, and in our first Zoom session for the month we looked at those companies which had benefited from the support payments.

In both sessions we saw examples of companies which are trading well and which show promise for investors.

During the latter part of September we learnt that one of Benalla U3A's long standing members, Graham Mitchell, has moved into care nearer his son who lives in Geelong. Graham started the original Investment Group over fifteen years ago, and it was only due to his ill health that it closed five years ago. Since then Graham has come to our meetings and has always shown interest in whatever was discussed. We wish him well in his new environment.

Our next Zoom Investment meeting will be on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 at 2pm.

Margaret Jenkins

## Let's Talk Books

People have been reading a great assortment of books this month. Trish Potter only took 2 days to read *The Daughters Tale* by Armando Lucas Correa, based on the true story of the Nazi massacre of a French Village in 1944. The author also wrote *The German Girl*. *The Light After the War* by Anita Ariel, written in a similar vein to *The Daughters Tale*, is also a true story of two Jewish friends who survived the Holocaust. *The Girl They Left Behind* by Roxanne Veletzos a family saga and love story that offers a glimpse into life in



war torn Bucharest in 1941 and living behind the Iron Curtain. So after all those rather sad stories some lighter reading for you. Shirley really enjoyed a small book of Collected Short Stories by Somerset Maugham, as Shirley said these were meticulously written. Being a fan of murder and mayhem Shirley also read, *Stately Homicide* by S.T. Haymon, mystery in a stately manor in Norfolk where Anne Boleyn once stayed. *Forty Years of Murder* is the biography of Keith Simpson who was Home Office Pathologist, he spent 40 years in the midst of murder, according to Shirley there was some humour in parts of this story. *The Haunted Monastery* by Robert Van Dusbilk AD666, travellers seek refuge from a mountain storm in a Taoist monastery where the Abbott Jade mysteriously dies. Now another change of pace, *A Ration Book* by Jean Fullerton. Jean Fullerton has written a series of 'Ration' books about the era when London's East End was being bombed during the blitz. Quite a good read. *The Lost Pearl* by Emily Madden, a romance saga from Pearl Harbour to the shores of Sydney. For readers of Fiona McIntosh and Anne O'Connor you will enjoy this book. *Heart of the Cross* also by Emily Madden, takes you from Ireland to Kings Cross, a young married woman finds life in Kings Cross is a lot different for her and their young son. I have just finished *The Bee and the Orange Tree* by Melissa Ashley, set in France in 1699, the untold story of the woman who invented fairy tales. I enjoyed this, but probably not for everyone. Hopefully we are coming to the end of being unable to see each other. I would like to think we could have a get together perhaps in early November, even if it is in the Benalla gardens

Geraldine McCorkell

## Music Appreciation

With the MSO having a "month off" in August from their planned concert schedule, September saw them making up for it with lots of wonderful music items to choose from – except for Beethoven which we had to invent.

A Mozart violin concerto, an energetically performed Vivaldi concerto played on recorder, and a Mahler symphony (No.1) to finish up comprised most of the first session. To keep up with our obligatory Beethoven work, his Egmont Overture got the programme off to a good start.

The second Session saw us start and finish in the eighteenth century (a Wagner overture to begin with and a scintillating Beethoven Choral Fantasy to conclude) with excursions into the 20<sup>th</sup> century in between – works by Bernstein, Prokofiev and Copland. For those who weren't part of it, why not check it out on the Music Appreciation page of the U3A website. You will be so glad you did.

Bill Squire

## Patchwork

A reminder to Patchwork Group members of the online patchwork exhibition to be launched on our website on Wednesday 18th November.

Please keep working on your projects with an end of year exhibition in mind as you would normally do. Send photographs of your work through to me by Monday 16 November.

If you need help with photographing your quilts and/or sending them in online or on USB, let me know.

Dorothy Webber

5762 2116 president@u3abenalla.com



Shirley Kearney and Beth Grant pictured last year.

## Politics and Current Affairs

Hi there folks Down under, how's that Deputy Sheriff gig going? You sure have got those Chinese upset, good luck we would like to help but are busy sending our beef wine & barley to a new customer, sure helps us in our trade war. You know Trump believes in never give a sucker an even break, not that we think you are losers! Now why are you guys holding back from evicting the Chinese from their illegal island forts. I hear your comedians reckon all you have to do is wait for climate change to do the job. Get with it suckers

and give them hell! Don't worry about retaliation those Chinese are just paper tigers, go twist their tails, they won't bite.

Hey you know we have an election coming up, Trumpy is in great form sending in the National Guard and teaching those soft on crime Democrat governors a lesson in Power Politics; burn baby burn! We have to stop armed migrants from taking our streets, sending out 17 year olds armed to the teeth shows we mean business. It's the right of every (White) American to shoot who he Goddam pleases, it goes real well with our gun lobby, you folks should give it a try! What's wrong with you people wearing facemasks, just carry your guns and change that constitution of yours!

Good to see you guys are trying to stop politicians using the postal service, but Pauline is one of the good guys, you got the wrong target. That Dan Andrews got the right idea, curfew all the migrants, but not white folks, someone have a word with the guy, he's taking it too seriously. Trump knows all about false news he can give Andrews a few tips on how to deal with a press Conference and the virus, his mate Boris Johnson is doing a top job, especially now he has Tony as guide.

We love the way you guys make politics a comedy routine, those NSW Nationals want to sit on a cross bench and be ministers, how the hell do you do that? Trump reckons he sure ain't going anywhere, he's asking that joker in Belarus to come over and give us some tips on how to handle women, mind you Trump reckons he's an expert there. Trump says Republican Presidents can do anything they want and doesn't need Putin this time and he sure likes the idea of President for Life, if Xi can do it so can Trump, that's our boy!

Why do you guys allow illegal votes through your Post, close it down! We can help you spread conspiracy theories but you had better go easy on our friends at Facebook. Remember good guys don't lose elections, its radical socialists and migrant girls like Harris who are trying to steal this election.

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Now the real news?

Not content with locking up asylum seekers indefinitely, some have been detained over 7 years. The Government decided it would be a good idea to remove their access to mobile phones. Just imagine if we did that to people in Melbourne under lock down! Minister Dutton claimed they had been accessing child pornography sites, what all of them? No evidence is made public, this seems like group punishment to me.

Helen Scheller was one of the letter writers to the Age who wrote about their plight. I quote her letter:- *"Refugees are rapidly becoming the forgotten people. They have been condemned to a life without hope merely because they had the temerity to believe that a country such as ours would welcome them and give them the chance for a new life they dreamed of."*

*Now new proposed legislation would strip them of their only link to the outside world, their phones. It appears that our Prime Minister can show compassion, and deliver practical help to every group in the country, but, alas, refugees are not on the list"*

You may not agree with Helen, I quote her letter as an example of direct action. Other U3A members are involved in Council elections, let me know what you have been doing.

Covert is giving our politicians a lesson in constitutional powers, I think a number of politicians have been reading their constitution handbooks for maybe the first time. Sure, Canberra has the money, but surprise the States have the powers. Border Force is looking a bit lame. Then to the Feds horror they find they are in charge of Aged Care facilities, suddenly Minister Hunt no longer wants to hammer Victoria on this issue, can we just talk about gas instead?

Jo Biden wants to talk about energy and climate change. Joe has this strange idea that gas is a carbon fuel responsible for methane pollution and global warming, he wants American allies to dump it and get on clean energy. If Biden wins Morrison might find there is a political price to be paid for gas.

Trump is set to leave the Paris Climate Agreement the day after the election, when countries can change their stance, that should play well for his audience and he remains President to Inauguration Day, plenty of time to stir trouble in the Courts and on the streets if he loses. Showing my bias, I meant if the Democrats try and steal it.

California is now due for cooler weather and reduced fire hazards, that was Trump's message to the State Governor. Maybe our fire crews can come back home and bring a few spare water bomber aircraft with them, it seems the Californians will not need them. Trump also cancelled the order for drones equipped to

aid fire-fighting, because they are made in China, maybe the Chinese would offer us a cheap deal now we have withdrawn our journalists?

The Chinese have taken note how Western Countries had a lot to say about Hong Kong, but took no action, resulting in Xi positioning forces to scare the Taiwanese into submission, or invade them, a lose, lose for Taiwan and the West. another fine mess!

Give Trump his due, he is withdrawing US Forces from Afghanistan as he promised, abandoning the civilian population to the war lords and Taliban once more. I wonder if Australia had any say in what Trump decided, or are we just do what we are told? At the end of the Gulf War when the US withdrew from Iraq I wondered what all the killing and bombs achieved. A broken country with warring factions and a brutalized civilian population that was ripe for the Taliban.

20 years on from the aircraft smashing into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, I fear the world is facing a dangerous future. A time for diplomacy? Or does no one believe in that anymore? I think we have been poisoned by the politics of fear and loathing, it's time to find our moral compass and let politicians know what WE think.

Terry Case

## Singing for Fun

Wonderful News! Saw Joyce Borschmann in the supermarket doing her shopping in the latter part of September. Joyce had much pleasure telling me that on the law of averages she should have still been in hospital. It shows that she has worked hard at her rehabilitation and has had a remarkable recovery. Well done Joyce!

Other members of the Singing group have been asking me when we are going to start Singing for Fun again. The answer unfortunately is that the Seniors Complex is currently closed. Until the Benalla Rural City Council re-opens the building our singing will not recommence. I am sure the Council realise that the socialisation that results from U3A activities has a very positive effect on mental health. With the gradual lifting of restrictions in Regional parts of Victoria we hope that Benalla Council find some way for some of our U3A activities to recommence in the near future.

Margaret Jenkins

## Stock and Land

*This month's 'Stock and Land' related story is by 'As Time Goes By' class member, Margaret Nelson.*

### 'Out of the Blue'

It happened on a sultry, cloudy afternoon. We sat on the back verandah, considering if it was going to rain, or if it was worthwhile going out to weed the garden. Out of the blue came the brightest flash of lightning, followed immediately by a deafening crack of thunder, the loudest I've ever heard. I darted for the door! I've had an unreasonable fear of thunderstorms since I was small, and we slept in our wired-in verandah in summer, often enduring summer storms.

The lightning felt so close we thought the house may have been hit. But there was no smell of burning, and the phone was still working, in fact it was ringing. Our worst nightmare was confirmed—a neighbour was calling to tell us our hayshed was alight. Our shed full of large clover hay rolls.

The lightning had struck an old pine tree, causing it to explode, sending branches far and wide, but worse, the lightning had raced across the ground in three directions. One lit a small grass fire, another went toward our neighbour's shed leaving a mark on the wall, and the third travelled about 100 metres to the end of our hayshed, igniting the end bales.

We had a sinking feeling that it would be very hard to extinguish, and we were right! The fire truck seemed to take ages to arrive, having gone to another lane with a similar name. Fences needed to be cut.

Everything seemed to be in slow motion, except the fire which raced up the side of the stack, then into the gap between the hay and shed roof. This acted as a wind tunnel that sucked the flames through and spread the fire rapidly. We could only stand by and watch helplessly. The bales had to be dragged out and saturated with water and detergent to extinguish them, which sadly rendered them useless for cattle feed.

Next morning, as we surveyed the sodden hay and twisted metal of the shed, it gave me an inkling of how people must have felt after bush fires ravaged their houses and property. I wondered how they coped with so much loss, so much mess to clean up. Our house was insured, but losing your home and possessions must be soul destroying, even if it is insured.

Strange how something happening 'out of the blue' can cause so much damage!

Margaret Nelson

## Sustainability

The articles emailed out to group members prior to each Zoom session are now posted on the [Sustainability](#) page on the website for others keen to keep informed about sustainability issues. Recent articles covered the "Low Emissions Technology Roadmap" launched by the federal government. To me, this roadmap is more about ideology and politics rather than a genuine energy plan. You can read the criticisms for yourself. Are you aware that President Xi, at the UN General Assembly spoke of a "green revolution" and committed China, the world's largest carbon emitter, to reaching net-zero emissions by 2060? You can read about that in one of the articles. Zoom meetings are held on the first and third Fridays at 10 am – all welcome.

John Lloyd

## Tech Savvy Talk

### Favourite 'apps'

Do you have a favourite app you'd like to share with other members? Here are some which came to our attention this month:

Judith Borthwick is using an app called '**Map My Walk**' to record the distances she walks on the Churchill Park basketball courts. She sets it to start, walks, pauses to check the distance on it if taking a break, then restarts it until ready to calculate the final distance. The app apparently can create graphs comparing distances walked on different occasions; calculate accumulated totals of distances walked, and more – but Judith says she is quite happy using it in a simple way to get feedback on the distances she has walked.

Self-described tadpole collector and frog breeder, Betty Milligan, is using her **mobile phone recording feature** to record the sounds of frogs in her pond. Betty described being excited recently at being able to record the sound of a growling frog ..."It is usually hard to get, requiring a long wait, late at night. It was really quite vocal". If you would like to hear a growling frog, Betty said she's happy to send a recording.

Our website manager is finding talking to **Google Home Assistant** more interesting than talking to herself during Covid! As well as her favourite requests 'Okay Google, play ABC Radio National' and 'Okay Google, play ABC Jazz', she is now regularly asking, 'Okay Google, What's the Time?'; 'Okay Google, what's the weather in Benalla?' Practising new prompts recently, she stated 'Okay Google, Bedtime' ... the Home Assistant asked for a time to set an alarm for the next morning, played nature sounds of frogs and crickets near a pond... "to help you fall asleep"... then signed off with "Sleep Well"!

If you have a favourite app you'd like to share, email details to [newsletter@u3abenalla.com](mailto:newsletter@u3abenalla.com) using the subject line 'Favourite Apps'.

## Unfinished Objects

The trial of the 'Unfinished Objects' Zoom course got off to a slow start this month, with only one taker. The sessions, involving the media team, Bev and Heather, proved productive and most enjoyable. We both had slow-going projects and happily chatted about the need to stop procrastinating and complete them. Heather has already finished one of her projects, a second downsizing of her study (pictured).

We have decided to change the sessions from weekly to monthly to make achieving results and reporting back on





them a little less stressful! The sessions will now be on the second Monday of the month from 2.30 to 3.15 pm. We aim to work on our unfinished objects or projects throughout the month, setting aside the 'Second Monday' afternoon to report back on progress. At 2.20 pm we pour ourselves a cup of tea or coffee, click on the link to our Zoom meeting and join others to share news of our projects to 3.15 pm.

If you would like to join in our next Unfinished Objects chat on Monday 12 October from 2.30 to 3.15 pm – here is the link to Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77973642602?pwd=RE1mem5sMUZ4MXFDSzZIZ0VHbHFpUT09>

Meeting ID: 779 7364 2602

Passcode: sVwM6y

Bev Lee and Heather Wallace

## Covid Musings

### 'Right Here, Right Now'

The sky is that clear ice blue that only a regional winter can produce. There is a snap- sharp-shiver feeling in the air. It is freezing.

My arthritic back is becoming stiff with cold as I lie spread-eagled on the bitumen and just gaze up at the pristine sky. I glance over to my left at Trevor a few yards away. Trevor is also prostrate on the bitumen. He says, "I remember once I had a holiday and the sky was a bit like this colour". Beyond Trevor I can hear the signal bells of the rail crossing as the morning passenger train heads down to Melbourne. The train is almost empty. If I squint a bit without my glasses I can see, on the other side of the rail crossing, the Great Northern Hotel, now closed and reduced to a takeaway. How sad. I remember some good times there.

Traffic on the Midland Highway is light today and mainly consists of small trucks, delivery vans and the odd car or bus so the fuel fumes don't worry us much. A stray police car slows and has a good look at me and Trevor and all the other eighteen masked persons lying on the basketball court in the cold clear early August morning.

It surely must look like a massacre from the police car. Or some futuristic terminus of geriatric junction. Or a movie set. But they move on.

"Roll onto your right side and bring your left leg up and cross it over your right". Okay, okay!

Much grumbling, groaning and silently mouthed expletives as all twenty of the Senior Exercise Class attempt to change position on our mats--- on the bitumen--- on the Benalla Netball Court--- in mid-winter---in the early morning. Dedicated die-hards we are and all determined not to enter into aged care in the foreseeable future. If there is a future.

The Covid 19 pandemic that is devastating the world is having an impact here in Benalla (almost at the bottom end of "the world"). We are about to go into stage 3 restrictions of the Government mandate on health protection from this deadly virus that will change our world forever and I have to confess I don't want to miss one surreal moment of it. This is our last class. Previously we were adhering to stage 2 restrictions which meant we could not attend our gym indoors and have been using the netball courts to achieve the "social distancing" rules that go with maximum gatherings.

Well that was a good thing you know. We discovered we did not need a gymnasium building with the walls lined with mirrors. Most of us are around 70+ years of age and who needs a mirror that often at this age. If any muscle is going to 'ripple' we take that as a miracle not an aesthetic compliment. So our class engenders a lot of laughs and if you can still laugh at yourself well you know you've made it to 'graceful ageing' with some degree of sanity. The freedom to bounce around the court with plenty of space, great



views and fresh air pumping in and out between squats and lunges gives us a sense that we are not redundant yet. We can enjoy the moment.

But back to change of position ---on the mat ---on the bitumen ---with the left and right legs a tangle as one tries to work out left and right upside down in reverse or whatever. What a view! (Not us.) Out there. Beyond the footy oval there are the gorgeous blossoms of early spring and the cattle which prompts continuous commentary by the farmers amid our group. Sometimes it is so foggy in the early mornings we can barely see each other and, apart from the laughter or groaning, our steamy breaths are the main indicators of social distance.

This class is “do or die” for me. I cannot imagine anywhere the setting could be more perfect. Where else but Benalla in August 2020.

Judy Perry

### “The Household Economy #2”



U3A's Pauline Bailey and Heather Wallace recently shared photographs of outdoor projects completed during the pandemic which have given them great pleasure.

Pauline calls her paths ‘the Covid Paths’ and mentioned edging the garden with mower strips to make her less likely to trip over in the garden ‘as time goes by’.

Other examples of household production are also apparent during Covid-19 restrictions; with even more jam; honey; fruit; fresh vegetables; home based cooking than usual being shared amongst friends and family.



Also relevant to household production, a monthly update from Les Rodgers on his hydroponic tomato production project:

“As you can see the warm weather recently has moved things along and I have had to increase the height of the grow light considerably. We now have flowers starting to open.



I should say the red tomatoes are Apollo F1 hybrids improved to be more resistant to disease. Also, they are able to set fruit at 10 degrees C. However, they are indeterminate and ‘in the wild’ can grow up to 2.5



metres high and need support. I can't accommodate that so I will terminate them at a lower height. They will still need support.

Next, because they are in my shed, bees will not be available so the flowers will be pollinated by the application of the back of an old electric toothbrush. Tomato flowers are pollinated by vibration. I may achieve my aim of tomatoes by Christmas!

Les"

## What's On

### Friday, October 2

10:00am Sustainability - Zoom Meeting  
2:00pm Investment - Zoom Meeting

### Wednesday, October 7

9:45am Easy Walks - Warby-Ovens  
National Park: Friends Track  
10:00am Demystifying Psychology Zoom  
Discussion Group

### Thursday, October 8

9:30am Birdwatching - Ridge Track, Warby  
Ranges

### Friday, October 9

10:00am Music Appreciation

### Monday, October 12

2:00pm Creative Writing - sharing of  
stories by email  
2:30pm Unfinished Objects - Zoom Chat

### Wednesday, October 14

8:30am Mid-Week Walks - Carters Creek

### Friday, October 16

10:00am Sustainability - Zoom Meeting  
1:00pm Demystifying Psychology - Zoom  
3:15pm Investment - Zoom Meeting

### Wednesday, October 21

9:30am Easy Walks – Eldorado  
10:30am Meet and Mingle – Benalla  
Gardens, near Art Gallery

### Friday, October 23

10:00am Music Appreciation

### Monday, October 26

2:00pm As Time Goes By – "This Life"

### Wednesday, November 4

9:15am Easy Walks - Myrtleford - Ovens  
River Scenic Trail

### Friday, November 6

10:00am Sustainability - Zoom Meeting

### Monday, November 9

2:00pm Creative Writing  
2:30pm Unfinished Objects - Zoom  
Discussion Group

### Wednesday, November 11

9.15am Mid-Week Walks – Mt Timbertop



## "Meet and Mingle"

**Benalla Gardens  
Wednesday 21 October  
10 to 11.30 am**

It is time to catch up! Come along to an informal 'Meet and Mingle' morning tea in the gardens next to the Art Gallery on Wednesday 21 October from 10 to 11.30 am.

'Bring Your Own' morning tea, tea/coffee/ beverages, chair, cushion, rug if cold and make the most of this opportunity to meet and mingle!

We are hopeful that numbers permitted to mingle will be increased on October 19, however if not, we will mingle in socially distancing groups of ten.

If you would like to be part of this activity, please contact Heather Wallace on 0418 353 244, if possible, by Monday October 19th.

