



Benalla and District Inc.

Newsletter – November 2015

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the U3A year draws to a close we finish with two highlights. The Singing for Fun Group will hold their annual Christmas concert in a new venue, the Cooina Hub. Joyce and her crew are sure to entertain us! The Christmas lunch is on the 25th November. I hope many of you will join us for these two events.

Next year we will hold two Enrolment days, the first at the Cooina Hub on Monday 18th January, 9.30-11.30. All are welcome. Our second enrolment day will be held at the Seniors on Wednesday 20th, again 9.30-11.30. If you cannot attend send the attached Enrolment form together with your payment to the Secretary.

This newsletter contains course outlines, timetables, enrolment forms. We are pleased to be offering a range of new classes in addition to our existing offerings. Classes finish at the end of November and resume in February next year.

I want to congratulate Judith who has been our Newsletter editor for the past six years. Judith has done an excellent job producing an informative newsletter and producing most of our publicity materials. Freida and Bev will take on the role of editing and producing the newsletter. The email address will be fmandrews46@gmail.com

Tutors please note that access to W4 will finish at the end of November and will resume in February next year. The security system will be on during the school holidays!

*Terry Case
President*

Newsletter 2016

- Following discussion at the November Executive Meeting it was decided that there will not be a January newsletter.
- Programs will commence in February as per the 2016 timetable attached.
- Freida Andrews and Bev Lee will be the newsletter editors. Emailed items for the newsletter are to be forwarded to Freida fmandrews46@gmail.com or delivered to Bev at 61 Monds Avenue, Benalla.
- The dates for the newsletter have been changed. The deadline will now be the 4th Monday of the month and posted newsletters should be received on either Monday or Tuesday of the following week.
- Emailed newsletters will be received a little earlier. The newsletter is also available on the U3A website <http://u3abenalla.weebly.com>

GROUP REPORTS

Armchair History: Invaders

The 2016 course will start with the Roman Invasion of Britain and will cover a momentous millennium. The period following the collapse of the Roman Empire was typically portrayed in history text books as the "Dark Ages", but modern interpretations now portray it in more light. If you were on the receiving end of a Viking raid or on the losing side against the Normans, you might be inclined to support the traditional view!

I have assembled a collection of wonderful TV documentaries that will enable us to sit back for another season of Armchair History. New members welcome! The Friday afternoon times are 1.15 start, 3.15 finish; this is at the request of the College.

Armchair Traveller

As the fill in convenor I had the pleasure of hosting Jenny Geer this afternoon as she spoke about volunteering in a disaster relief project in Nepal. This was somewhat different from the usual Armchair Traveller. We were shown photos of the remote mountainside villages and their inhabitants that Jenny and her team were sent to assist.

Volunteering on behalf of Disaster Aid International, (an Australian Rotary project) Jenny delivered and installed equipment to provide safe water supplies and provided emergency accommodation materials. More information on this project can be found on the internet at www.disasteraidaustralia.org.au The second part of Jenny's session was a follow up to a Meet & Mingle presentation this year, on the Silk Road. The photos of this remote part of the world were inspirational. Jenny did some hard but rewarding travel through "the 'stans" (Uzbek and others) to reach the relative comforts of Georgia. An excellent way to end the year, thanks Jenny.

Art Appreciation

On November 2nd we gathered at the Art Gallery to hear Helga Leunig speak about her wonderful collection of photos: Mother Country - Reflections of Australian Rural Life.

Helga firstly spoke of her early interest in photography then of her move to the country and the home schooling of her children. In this collection of photos they speak of the things that may be going from our country way of life as shown with the photo of the mixed cups and saucers lined up for a

communal "cuppa" in the country hall. The use of mist and fog was also noted by the participants. We would all recommend this exhibition to all U3A members. We will meet for the last time for 2015 on December 7th at the Gallery.

Astronomy

U3A Astronomy report- Nov 2015

November 17th was our last Astronomy meeting for 2015 owing to the end of the school year arrangements which prevent us access to W4.

Martin started us off with a thought provoking, excellent report on 'Black Holes'. There have been many mathematics and astrophysics theories, and they and the research from various organisations has enabled us to see what a 'Black Hole' could look like if we could actually see it - via artist's representations. 'Black holes' -many at the center of universes such as the Milky Way suck in all and nearby star systems and light permanently so we can't actually see them as no light ever gets out of Black Holes. Mathematics and Astrophysics have revealed this incredible theory - "maybe our universe is IN an actual Black Hole." Hence the possibility of 'worm holes' to other universes, and the existence of 'parallel universes.'

In the 1960's 'continental drift' was regarded as theory and to some, Einstein's 'theories of relativity' have yet to be totally proven. Anything is possible; more research still needs to be done. This provoked much discussion which was what we were aiming for.

A new planet far beyond Pluto has just been discovered, much smaller than Pluto. Little is known about it yet, as Jeff read out from Rupe's newspaper article.

Bev finished us off with 2 interesting u tubes of actual facts this time, of a Russian rocket launching and connecting with the International Space Station. The Russian Soyuz rocket was seen being loaded onto a special train in bleak conditions late at night in Kazakhstan in 2014. The German Shepherd sniffer dogs patrolling the tracks were accompanied by serious looking bomb experts, along with all the other retinue wearing standard Russian greatcoats. U.S.A. and Russia then cooperated to send a NASA astronaut, a Russian cosmonaut and a flight engineer to the ISS. We saw the incredible precise docking and marvelled at the advanced technology. When you see the ISS whizzing across the sky think of the people on it doing all the research and all the difficulties of getting there and resupplying it

Our Christmas B.B.Q. will be held on Wednesday 2nd December by Lake Benalla at the picnic site behind the library. All current and former Astronomy participants, partners and friends are welcome.
We wish everyone a Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

Comparative Religion

We started the session with part of a DVD on the early days of Christianity as an introduction to a visit from some speakers on behalf of the Jehovah's Witnesses. They spoke about the history of the movement, and some of the achievements in producing different translations of the Bible – both around modernising the English translations as well as other languages. Unfortunately, it was generally felt that some of our questions were not adequately answered.

Jenny brought along some Singing Bowls, and spent some time talking about the history and use of the bowls – the ritual and meaning behind the use. As well as demonstrating the sound from the bowls, we were all able to have a turn, feeling the vibrations and hearing the sound. Thank you Jenny.

Mike is busy planning our first session for next year, and all are welcome to join us.

Chat n' Chew

Chat n'Chew will recommence in February 2016. It will be held at the Royal Hotel on 19th February at 11.45 am. Please contact Shirley on 5762 6768 by Tuesday 16th February for bookings or cancellation.

e-Book Group

Our last session for the year was a memorable one, finishing our list with *Cloudstreet* by Tim Winton - a fitting finale for a great year of books. Post discussion, Steven downloaded Kindles with the books for 2016, chosen after much consideration by the group over the course of the year. We then tucked into some goodies, and reminisced about books read (not on the list!), and those we propose to read, in what promises to be a great year ahead. We have expressed our appreciation to library staff for providing such a wonderful venue for our meetings, and look forward to continuing in the library next year.
We look forward to seeing our book group members

next year, and of course, new members are always welcome.

Garden Appreciation

November 26th

Meet at Centre Car Park at 9.45 am.

We will visit the garden of Louise Armstrong and her mother. Mary Daws, Goomalibee Road. Please byo morning tea. Hot water, milk, tea and coffee will be there for us.

We will then go to Geraldine McCorkell's for lunch. Byo lunch to share.

February 25th 2016

We will visit Max and Heather Roll's garden, Grant Drive, Benalla. May visit one other garden. More information later.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Thank you Judith for all your work on the newsletter.

Gwen 5762 7017, 0438 627010

Garden Team

With three apologies, the last group had to work a little harder, but Lois's neat and tidy garden in Cooinda doesn't take a lot of work. A bit of dead heading roses, planting some zinnia seedlings for future colour and some potting up, and we were done. A delightful afternoon tea and a chat was enjoyed as usual. We were helped by Lois's granddaughter Evie, aged 4.



Future plans - are there any prospective new members who would like to join the team? Elspeth would appreciate hearing at or by the last gathering for 2015 at Tulip Street in Violet Town on November 30th.

Garden Team February meetings will be on the 8th at Shirlie's and 29th at Kathy's. As that's leap day I feel we should do high pruning or gutter clearing without ladders!

Investment Group 1



Special Report from Investment Group No 1

Our report this month is tinged with a note of sadness but more especially a feeling of pride that this dedicated group can boast of a great history of achievement and fellowship.

Nineteen years ago in 1996 before the Benalla U3A began, an enthusiastic group of like-minded people decided to form an Investment group to research and hone their skills studying the Australian share market.

It began its activities under the auspices of "The National Seniors" movement and met in the old Presbyterian Hall under the leadership of Mr Graham Mitchell. The group comprised 10 foundation members of whom 7 are still regularly in attendance at the meetings. Graham has continued in the role of convenor of the group for the entire period of 19 years and the numbers remain at 10 with the later addition of 2 new members.

At the commencement of activities the use of computers was not general within the group which depended on data gained from investment journals and other sources. Over the years members have become a highly skilled group using sophisticated computer programmes in their research. In more recent times the group has been regularly invited to be a contestant in the "Shares Race" competition

under the name "U3A Benites" conducted by the Sunday Age newspaper enjoying and achieving some success by winning the competition on several occasions. At its most recent meeting we were pleased to welcome a visitor, who on one occasion ran 2nd to our group and travelled from Melbourne especially to meet our members.

The group believes its continued success can be attributed to the leadership of Graham Mitchell, A unique meeting format and good fellowship.

Unfortunately the Investment group has reached the stage when it must close down its activities owing to the seniority of most of the members who are in their 80s and 90s and one key member is moving from Benalla.

Happily the formal closure of our meetings will in no way change the bonds of friendship and fellowship so deeply forged over the last 19 years.

Investment Group 2

The November meeting of Investment Group 2 saw a more buoyant mood with the market having increased 3% since our October meeting. We discussed a range of stocks which had shown an increase in their price since July this year, and also touched on International events which made a positive contribution to some of these shares. The afternoon was completed by a brief comparative look at basic Taxation Rates in Australia, United States, United Kingdom and New Zealand. At afternoon tea we welcomed Bev Lee who took some photos of our group.

The next meeting of Investment Group 2 will be on Friday 4th December at 2pm in W4.

Let's Talk Books

Hello all you great readers. As we missed out in November (Melbourne Cup Day) we will have our last gathering at the Library on December 1st at 2 o'clock with a little celebration for Christmas as well. See you there. Geraldine

Lifeball

Lifeball will be winding down next month, with play commencing on 7th December, followed by a breakup lunch at the Golf Club, starting at noon. We have a new member, which is lovely, and a couple of prospective members commencing in the new year, beginning on FEBRUARY 1! Last Monday we had 13 players for the first time for several

weeks, including myself - the first time I have played since May, when I broke my ankle.

It was SO good to be back playing, although I have been umpiring for several weeks. I am still a little hesitant about sudden movements when changing direction, but everyone is very compassionate, and giving me space.

If anyone would like to consider playing next year, give me a call, and I will gladly sell you our great fun, invigorating game. We will begin at 10am throughout next year - it seems to suit the majority of players, so, until someone says otherwise, we will try that time, beginning again, as stated already, on Monday February 1, at the sports pavilion in Ackerley Avenue.

Best wishes to all for the Festive Season!

Marg Merriman 5762-1404

Meet and Mingle

A very enjoyable Meet and Mingle was held this morning at The Hub, Cooina. The Singing for Fun group entertained us with a range of songs. The three sessions were conducted by Brian Greed, Faith Hicks and Margaret Merriman. U3A members were greatly appreciative of the music and appreciate the practise involved to get to their high standard.

Many quilts were displayed by the Patchwork group and these colourful and skilfully made quilts caused a lot of comment.



Singing for Fun group at the U3A November meeting at The Hub, Cooina. Conductor Faith Hicks

President Terry Case thanks the members of the Singing for Fun Group and the patchworkers for a very enjoyable morning. He estimated that there were about 110 people present which represented half of our U3A Benalla members. A varied and most enjoyable program was performed and the 'Vegemite song' which many of us remembered from days gone by brought a smile to our faces. A very nice morning tea was served after the first session conducted by Brian Greed and this was followed by two more segments conducted by Faith Hicks and Marg Merriman.

Music Appreciation

23 October 2015

John and some other members being absent overseas, we had a compliment of three members. We decided to have a 'fun' session. We listened to works by Mozart, Rachmaninov and Handel. We rediscovered Australian pianist, Eileen Joyce, singers Kiri Te Kanawa and Nina Simone, finishing with Paul McCartney.



Australian pianist Eileen Joyce

13 November 2015

Doug Geeson conducted the session. He presented a number of Australian composers. He also showed a DVD entitled Australian Voices, which was performed in Wangaratta recently.

The second half of the session was a real treat. Doug and Marjory recently went on a cruise, called 'The Performing Arts Bravo'. Some of the artists who performed on board the ship and presented on DVD, were Anthony Warlow, James Morrison, David Hobson, Liz Calloway, the Gregorian Brothers, and others.

Patchwork



This beautiful quilt was made by Heather for Doreen, a patchworker who is on the sick list. It is made in the bright colours which Doreen loves and to a pattern she admires. Heather had made room on the back panel for group members to sign.

Our patchwork Christmas luncheon will be held at The Hub, Cooina on Thursday 3rd December at 12.30 p.m. Next year we will be doing a project quilt and will choose the one we will do from three suggestions at the Christmas breakup. Please bring along a plate to share and a wrapped fat quarter as a gift to exchange.

Politics

Let's hope for some peace and goodwill to end a heart-breaking year for so many people. U3A Politics will resume in February.

Singing for Fun

By the time this newsletter is printed, 30 of our singers would have presented a programme for "Meet and Mingle", at the "Hub" Cooina. On Thursday December 3rd, 20 of our members will sing for the residents in care at Cooina. We will follow this with a break –up lunch at the Golf Club. Please phone Joyce on 57625013 if you wish to add your name to the lunch list.

We are sad to be losing two of our valued members at the end of this year. Fred Cason is moving to Shepparton and Tom Wales is moving to Queensland. We will miss them. This group works well because of the willingness of members to work hard. We would not function without our outstanding pianist Gwen Barnes, our leaders Faith Hicks, Brian Greed and Margaret Merriman and our treasurer Margaret Howard. Other great workers are Ian Grace, Jan Casey and Trish Roe. Our heartfelt thanks go to you all.

We look forward to another great year in 2016.

Tech Savvy Seniors

Tech Savvy Seniors has now completed the four pilot sessions planned for Semester II and has been timetabled at the same time - the second Wednesday from 10 to 12 midday in W4 – in 2016. Our November session began with sharing of 'work in progress' on blog sites and twitter feeds, with the topic of the day 'Smart TV's'. To set the scene we watched a 'Download this Show' segment on the

new Apple TV's; then headed to Terry's house where he presented a most informative session on the role of Chromecasting in converting a digital television into a Smart TV; demonstrated how mobile phones can be used to manage content on Smart TV's and showed us many other possibilities available through Smart TV's. For most of us it was quite a leap into the future. The handout Terry prepared for us should prove very handy. Thank you, Terry.

Our 'Mentors' working group is planning the new 'Tech Savvy Drop In' and will meet on Wednesday 2 December from 10 am to 12 midday at Bev's for a planning session.

The 'Tech Savvy Drop In' aims to support members who would like to develop knowledge and skills in using computer technology – whether PC's, laptops, tablets and even mobiles. Tech Savvy members will be on hand at the Drop In to support particular learning needs – for example, to send an email; use the camera and manage photos; set up a letter; send an SMS, and more. You can find out more details about the 'Tech Savvy Drop In' in the 2016 Course and Activity Guide.

Towards a Sustainable Future

Are you concerned about environmental sustainability and contemplating joining 'Towards a Sustainable Future'? Each fortnight our group reads through and discusses at least seven well researched media articles selected by our convenor John Lloyd as adding to the knowledge pie on sustainability and climate change. In our last class, for example, we discussed articles 'Climate change sets our hottest October'; 'Doctors warn of climate risk to children'; 'Now is the time to put price on carbon world leaders say'; 'Pacific nation urges Australia to bring forward emissions cuts'; 'Chief Scientist's all electric dreams'; 'Burning question hangs over coal's future'; 'Energy – Finkel's vision 'long term', Fossil fuels have role to play still'; 'Iron, coal prices up in flames: analysts'; 'Investors told to query fossil fuel forecasts'; finishing up with a longer article 'As drought looms, the Murray-Darling is in much healthier shape – just don't get complacent'. Class members particularly enjoy reading about positive developments and discussing local and regional issues. A number of participants have been discussing sustainability related issues in the group for some years, so the accumulated environmental wisdom in the class is at a very well informed level, making for very interesting discussions. For example

while reading the article 'Climate change sets new records', we discussed accrual of heat varying in different places, with warming greater in northern Australia than in Tasmania; the gulf stream having a huge impact on the Arctic; the buffering effect of oceans differing in different locations, and that heating changes synoptic patterns which change prevailing winds which may change cooling patterns e.g. Perth and west coast summers over recent years. We also watch thought provoking documentaries such as the ABC's Catalyst program; monitor the monthly Bureau of Meteorology reports shown on Country Wide and have the occasional excursion. Armchair analysts rather than activists, we are however considering taking on a manageable community awareness raising project in 2016 which contributes towards a sustainable future. To quote from our course description – *'No prior knowledge is required, just a general interest in the issues around climate change and sustainability. With discussion of these topics throughout the year you will find that you become better informed about these issues.'*

Walks

Easy Walk Wednesday November 4

Eight walkers set off from Ridge road in the Warby Ranges toward the Pangarang Lookout. The weather was fine and the bush was looking fresh after the recent rain. A profusion of bright yellow Golden Everlastings lined most of the track, with the occasional blue of Finger flowers, Wahlenbergias and Rock Isotomes. We lunched at the lookout where an old tree has forced roots through and lifted a mass of granite. We had great views of the surrounding farm lands. The walk distance was 4.54km.



Mid-week Walk Wednesday November 11

Three cars, each with 4 people, left Benalla at 8.15 a.m. en route to Buffalo. We drove up the

mountain past Lake Catani and parked the cars not far from Blackfellows Plain. Our morning walk included Mahomets Coffin, the Sentinal [also called the Piano], The Corral and The Castle. It was a super walk with so many different shapes and colours of rocks, and at times great views. Lunch was enjoyed back near the cars, before we headed up hill to view The Cathedral and The Hump. We could see the Cresta Ski Runs, The Horn and looked towards the Buffalo Plateau and many Mountain Ranges in the distance. Native flowers were in abundance on both walks. Next, back to our cars and we drove to The Chalet area for afternoon tea and a look around. The Chalet gardens were fantastic with many wonderful colourful rhododendrons. A big thanks to Vaughan, our walk leader.



Wine Appreciation - 2016

We shortly will embark on the seventeenth year for our Wine Appreciation group and again will welcome suggestions for the program.

Wednesday 24 February 2016

Meet at carpark at 10.30 am for a visit to Morrisson's Winery at Glenrowan. Previous visit was in 2006.

Lunch will be close by.

Noel Meagher 5762 3149

Writing Workshop

'Writing Workshop' survived the year on a positive note after a disappointing start as 'Benalla Writers' in February with only two participants! We changed our name to 'Writing Workshop' to reflect our inexperience at creative writing and decided to focus on short memoir related stories. By September, a regular four or five participants were meeting fortnightly instead of monthly. We have

great fun and all ended the year with a portfolio of memoir related stories. Most of our 'stories' are based on ABC Open's '500 word' topics – topics such as 'Grandparents', 'Lost and Found', 'I quit', 'A Test of Courage', 'A Friendship Tested', 'For Better For Worse' and 'Cringe'. We added other topics when we moved to fortnightly meetings – a bedtime story for a child; a stand up comedy set, 'The Year that Made Me' and 'Christmas'. You can see some of our stories on the website. Our meetings are enjoyable, with the sharing of stories leading to reminiscing about such things as living on a sheep farm; having our first bra fitted in the lingerie department; our first love; travelling overseas, and more.

Writing Workshop is being offered again in 2016, with our first formal meeting in W4 on the third Monday in February from 1.30 to 3.30 pm and our first more informal café based meeting on the first Monday in March from 2.30 to 3.30 pm. If you are interested in reminiscence based writing, with an occasional change of genre to keep things interesting, we would love you to join us.

Some Important Dates for your Diary

- Wednesday 25th November 2015
U3A Christmas luncheon at Mansfield Golf Club. Bus leaves Benalla Bus Lines at 11.00 am
- Monday 18th January 2016 9.30 – 11.30 am
U3A Enrolment Day at The Hub Cooina for Cooina residents
- Wednesday 20th January 2016 9.30 – 11.30 am
U3A Enrolment Day at the Senior Citizens Rooms
- Monday 22nd February
Items for newsletter due. Forward to Freida at fmandrews46@gmail.com or deliver to Bev at 61 Monds Street, Benalla.

Our thanks go to Steph Ryan MP and the staff at her Benalla Office for the printing of this newsletter.



I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

This will be my last newsletter as editor and am handing over to Freida and Bev in the new year.

I will still be involved in U3A and next year will convene Collectors and continue with most of the programs I have been involved in for several years.

Many thanks to my husband, John. I could not have done the newsletter without his cooperation. He was always willing to deliver it to be printed and collect it and when necessary fold and post it.

Best wishes

Judith Borthwick