



Benalla and District Inc.

Newsletter – January 2020

U3A Benalla & District Inc

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Please send all newsletter items for the newsletter to newsletter@u3abenalla.com by 25 January 2020.

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Welcome to 2020 – Happy New Year to All!

Summer School 2020

Benalla U3A's Summer School Program is now in its third year! In December 2017 Dorothy Webber piloted a summer program with a session dedicated to Trivial Pursuit, and a second session 'Morning Memories' where stories and photographs were shared. In January 2019 the first 'Tech Savvy Be Connected' summer school program was offered by Jenny Sawyer and Margaret Jenkins. In 2020, three summer school activities are being held in the U3A meeting room over the January break:

Community Singing

Friday 10th, 17th and 24th January – 10.30 am - 11.45 am

Due to a kind offer by Brian Greed, Singing for Fun are running three **Community Singing** mornings in January. Singing for Fun members and other members of U3A are invited to attend. Each session will have a break for morning tea and is expected to finish about 11.45 am. *Contact:* Margaret Jenkins 5762 6944

Patchwork

Thursday 9th and 23rd January - 10am-4pm

The Patchwork Group is continuing its tradition of holding day long sessions in January, increasing the number this year from one to two. *Contact:* Dorothy Webber 5762 2116 or 0412 263 071

Tech Savvy Be Connected

Tuesday 7th, 14th and 21st January – 10am-11am

Whether or not you attended previous sessions last semester, you are welcome to bring your portable devices to our summer school to extend your computing knowledge and skills.

Contact: Margaret Jenkins 5762 6944 Jenny Sawyer 0409 545 182

Life Ball

Recommences Monday 13th January 9.45 to 11.30am

Life Ball is also returning in mid-January at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre in Ackerly Avenue. Weekly sessions recommence from Monday 13th January. *Contact:* Max Powell 0423 525 565

Enrolment Days 2020

Monday January 13 and Wednesday 15 January 9:30 -11:30am – Seniors Community Building

Renewing members will receive enrolment information and documents early in the New Year as a mail out (post or email). Both enrolment days this year are being held at the Seniors Community Building.

Enrolment information and forms will be available at the RedB4 Book Shop (next to Hide's Bakery) and on the website if you're not able to attend Enrolment Days.

Dorothy Webber, President

Convenors – Thank You!



The Convenors' meeting held in late October was very well attended, as the photo reveals! The meeting provided the chance to thank convenors for their contribution and proved most informative, with each Convenor sharing information about the courses and activities they convene.

As enrolment days for 2020 draw near, it's time to thank convenors who have stepped back and new convenors who are stepping up in 2020.

Thank you so much **Judith Borthwick** (Collectors); **Meg Dillon** (Moments in Australian History; History of Western Civilisation; and a four year 'opera subscription' series); **Shirley Kearney** (Chat N Chew) and **Les Rogers** (Tech Savvy Talks and Tech Savvy Talkers), for the important and highly valued roles you have taken in convening programs for U3A Benalla over the past four or more years. Thank you also for contributing to the newsletter and website - we hope you enjoy looking back at your reports over the next few years.

To **Alex Adkins** (Coin Collectors), **Neville Gibb** (A Different History of Germany), **Brian Harker** (The News - Fact or Fiction?), **Janet Martens** (German Conversation), **Carol Perry/Broken River Artists** (A Taste of Art), **Jane Rushworth** (Demystifying Psychology), **Jenny Sawyer** (Tech Savvy Apple Devices – Intermediate) and **Margaret Jenkins/Bill Parris** (Be Connected Drop In) thank you for offering new programs. To **Dorothy Webber** (Collectors), **Neville Gibb** (Tech Savvy Talks), **Max Powell** (Life Ball) and others who have stepped up in 2019 or are stepping up in 2020 to convene existing groups - thank you. Your preparedness to offer new programs and keep successful programs going makes U3A Benalla thrive.

Group Reports

Bushwalks

Easy Walks

The last walk for 2019 was a leisurely stroll along part of the Benalla Walking Track followed by a delicious shared morning tea and a discussion on proposed walks for next year.

Convenors, Wendy and Margaret wish members a Healthy and Happy 2020 and we look forward to seeing you on a walking track in March 2020.

Watch this space for the program commencing March 2020.



Wendy Sturgess Margaret Walshe

Collectors

See you on Monday 10 February 2020 at 10 am. We will start the year with "Favourite items - new or old".

Dorothy Webber

Creative Writing

For our December class on 9 December, we agreed to either add an ending to an existing piece of writing or perhaps edit the end of an earlier piece to add a new ending or make it more relevant to the story. It was interesting to see how our writing had developed over the year and the ending that each came up with. These ranged from what happened to a lost love, to putting a lost soul to rest.

We followed this with discussion around the class for 2020. It was decided that we will continue to start each class with a writing challenge, with less emphasis on word challenges. Feedback is an important part of developing our writing skills and we are looking at providing more emphasis on this in 2020.

Joy Shirley

Exploring the Universe

Exploring the Universe ... and enjoying the wonders of the Cosmos.

Advanced technologies are giving us a whole new perspective of the Universe. Today the fields of Astronomy, astrophysics and cosmology have merged and are being published in a manner that is easily understood by the public.

At "Exploring the Universe" we journey far beyond our solar system with material from International Space Agencies who share their discoveries through text and audio visual content

Last year in retrospect: Just some of our topics: We started the year with a rundown of space and time; seeing the light of the Universe from ages past.

In March we actually listened to the sound of the wind on another planet, Mars! We followed this with film from the European Space Agency's 'Mars Express' orbiter. We could see the topography of hills and valleys and erosion from wind and ancient water courses. We followed new discoveries on Mars throughout the year.

Against the blackness of space we saw the landing of the Chinese Moon Lander that will explore the side of the Moon that is always turned away from us.

In April: Newsflash! The first evidence of a Black Hole. A world wide synchronized link up of radio telescopes has filmed the event horizon, the area surrounding a black hole. No one can see a black hole. They are completely invisible. Yet now we have an image of the shadow of a black hole in a galaxy 55 million light years from Earth.

In May we studied the birth, life and death of stars.

June, we listened to a Marsquake from a seismograph on Mars and explored more of The Red Planet.

July was the 50th Anniversary of Man landing on the Moon. We saw original footage of Neil Armstrong landing the spacecraft manually and his first steps on the Moon and film of the journey back to Earth.

August: Through film we relived a total eclipse of the Sun at the La Silla Observatory at the high altitude of the Atacama Desert in Chile.

September: We delved into the field of Radio Astronomy.

October: We study Cassiopeia A nebula, a cloud of gas and dust and a star nursery. When this star ran out of fuel and collapsed it blew up as a massive explosion and released elements that are the building blocks of life here on Earth and perhaps elsewhere!

November: Our own CSIRO Murchison Radio Observatory in West Australia. A mysterious Fast Radio Burst (FRB) from outer space has been traced back to its home galaxy for the first time. Powerful FRB's emit the same amount of energy in a millisecond that the Sun produces in 80 years!

And we saw much, much more. Not everything can be packed into newsletter reports. Why not join us? We are all learning together. The only requirement is an enquiring mind.

We wish everyone A Happy Christmas and a peaceful and interesting New Year.

Bev Morton

Film and Literature

We discussed the film 'Judy' at our last 2019 class. This was the story of Judy Garland's English performance tour towards the end of her life.

The film included background to Judy Garland's rise to fame, with the treatment she received as Dorothy in "Wizard of Oz" and as a rising star. This provided an understanding of her behaviour and problems in her later life with her addiction to prescription drugs and alcohol. She did not lead the life of a normal teenager and started to realise what she had missed towards the end of her life. In many ways it was a sad film, so in that sense not enjoyable, but we enjoyed the insights into her life and some excellent performances.

We are looking forward to returning in February 2020, with a new name for the class – "Film **AS** Literature". As it will be the first class for the year and we may be welcoming new members, our discussion will be for everyone to talk about a film they have watched over the summer break. This could be at BPACC, Swanpool, on television or DVD. This will be a great way to introduce everyone & learn about a range of different films.

Joy Shirley

Games

Games will re-commence on Monday 3 February at 1:30 pm - with our Trivia Brain in working order!!

Dorothy Webber

Investment

At the December meeting of Investment we had a special segment on Managed Bonds presented by one of our members Les Rodgers. Les told us about the variety of Funds that are available in Australia including Mutual Funds and Market Neutral funds. Thank you Les for a well prepared and very informative segment.

Malcolm Sanders supplied us with a handout from Market Index showing current high yielding shares available on the Australian Stock market.

We also looked at some shares which have shown considerable capital improvement over the past six and 12 month periods.

Congratulations to Nola McDonald who won the Monthly Share selection competition which we ran during 2019. This means back to back wins of the Monthly competition for Nola which is quite an achievement.

Congratulations also to Margaret Walshe who won the Yearly selection with Nanosonics Limited. Both competitions keep us informed about how various shares are progressing during the year as well as being a bit of fun and keeping our competitive spirits alive.

Thank you to all members of Investment group for their continuing comments during our sessions. Best wishes to everyone for a happy, healthy and enjoyable 2020. Hope to see you all next year.

Margaret Jenkins

Let's Talk Books

At our meeting in December quite a few war-time books had been read. *To Die in Spring*, *Code Name Verity*, *The Moscow Sleepers* (a trilogy), *Barbed Wire and Roses*, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, to name a few. A book much enjoyed was *Against All Odds*, the inside story of the Thai Cave Rescue. The reader also found *Great Australian Flying Doctor Stories* the reader very funny. *The Testaments* by Margaret Atwood, the sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale* was voted pretty boring, whilst *The Real Wallace Simpson* and *Lady in Waiting* by Anne Glenconnor made for good reading. *Mysteries Deadly Harvest*, *Cold Case*, *Suitcase Baby*, *The Court Reporter* for the crime lovers, whilst the general fiction readers enjoyed *The Crimson Room*, *A Taste For It* (Monica McInerney), *Oceans Between Us* and *The Snow Geese* all rated well.

We wish Margaret Sellars a speedy recovery, hope you are back with us in 2020 Margaret. Have a happy and healthy Christmas everyone, do lots of reading, we will catch up in February.

Geraldine McCorkell

Recorder Group

With Christmas approaching we fine-tuned our song selection to include some beautiful Christmas carols.

And then, armed with some of our old favourite songs, our newly learned Christmas carols and our trusty descants, altos and tenor, we set out to share our music with the residents at Cooina. How lovely it was to hear them sing along with us - the melodic "Good King Wenceslas", "Silent Night" and "We Three Kings" with three different recorder parts, the joyful "Deck the Halls" and "Joy to the World" were popular. "Jingle Bells" was the perfect finisher.

Our final 2019 Recorder session was held at North East Artisans - chatting and chewing in their charming courtyard with not a recorder in sight but with plenty of plans to practise and play again next year.

Pat Treleaven

Patchwork

Patchwork is meeting as part of the Summer School program - Thursday 9, 23 January 10am-4pm.

Vivienne Shepherd is holding a Workshop for us on **Saturday March 7th, 2020 from 9:30am to 4.00 or 5.00pm**. We will be making a bag. You will need to bring a 1 jelly roll to the workshop. Vivienne will supply the lining at a cost. The cost for the Workshop is \$50

Dorothy Webber

Singing for Fun

Congratulations to members of the choir on two great performances at Freemason's Homes and Cooina in the early part of December. Your efforts were warmly appreciated by residents and visitors and staff of both establishments.

The U3A Singing for Fun group is organised by our three conductors, Faith Hicks, Brian Greed and Margaret Merriman. They do a marvellous job selecting suitable songs for the choir to try, and also for providing guidance to the choir to improve the quality of performances. On behalf of our members I would like to thank the conductors and also Gwen Barnes for her piano accompaniment during the year. Gwen puts in a great deal of practice behind the scenes, and your efforts are really appreciated.

I would also like to thank Trish Roe and her team who do a great job with morning tea each time we meet. Also thank you to Margaret Howard for putting the books away most weeks, and to Ian Grace for opening and closing the room each time we meet, and arranging the chairs for us to sing. Without these people our group would not run as efficiently as it does.

In January 2020 due to a kind offer by Brian Greed we are running three Community Singing mornings. These are on Friday 10th, 17th and 24th January 2020 at 10.30am. All Singing for Fun members and also other members of U3A are invited to attend. Each session will have a break for morning tea, and is expected to finish about 11.45am. Please note these Community Singing mornings are scheduled for Friday's, not Thursday's as Patchwork is using the U3A room on the Thursday's.

When we resume Singing for Fun in February 2020 we will be meeting in the Main Auditorium instead of the U3A Room for our first three sessions. This is a trial arrangement to see if we are more comfortable in less cramped conditions than in our U3A room. Our sessions on Thursday 6th, 13th and 20th February will commence at 9.30am and run until 11.30am. This time change is to work with the senior's group who have their Thursday lunch starting at 11.45am.

May I take this opportunity to wish all Singing for Fun members a happy, healthy and enjoyable 2020. Hope to see you all again next year.

Margaret Jenkins

Stock and Land

Water shapes Josh's Business Life.....

Josh Kirby came to Stock and Land's notice, as a farmer from Killawarra, near the Ovens River north west of Wangaratta.

But it turned out, when he spoke to our group in December, that he is far more than that. For two days a week he is paid to be a regional engagement officer for the Murray Darling Basin Authority - there are five around the basin - and for another two days a week, he has helped develop and co-ordinates activities, related to a Benalla Rural Council plan for how to deal with emergencies like fires, floods, storms, heat waves and even blue green algae.

Josh asked the group what he should talk about first and the response was his family's farm.

Killawarra Farm, operated with wife Clare and their two children, is adjacent to the Warby-Ovens National Park and features the seasonal Sandy Creek which runs through the property.

He said they aimed to produce the highest quality lamb and beef at the lowest possible cost to the natural environment. "Our farm is home to about 100 Dorper ewes, Blonde d'Aquitaine and Limousin cattle, free range chooks and other home grown produce".

Because of lower than normal rainfall in the last couple of years, they have reduced production to suit. Market ready animals are processed in Wangaratta and 18 to 22kg lamb carcasses are available whole or as cuts, direct to customers like family members, friends, or others attracted through social media.

Josh said they chose Blonde d'Aquitaines because of their good temperament and because they yielded about 50 percent meat compared which was better than most breeds.

As emergency management liaison officer for Benalla, Josh said he was "the main conduit between the public and the council about emergency matters". The Municipal Emergency Management Plan committee, of which he is a member, meets once a month and often in Benalla because it is central to the north east. He said the lead body in an emergency would be the SES.

Regarding the MDBA, Josh said he regretted the opening of the water market since 2007 to anyone who wanted to invest. "It was established to get people through the millennial drought, but it had the advantage of opening up new country to irrigation, like almond plantations on the Murray," he said.

He said it was not widely realised that there were huge water losses in the basin due to evaporation. For example, in a good year 530,000GL (gigalitres) might be recorded flowing in the upper ends of the Barwon-Darling river systems. "But 90 percent of that will have evaporated by the time it gets south to Broken Hill," he said.

David Palmer

Program News

New Courses (#2)

The November newsletter included an introduction to new courses *A Different History of Germany (Neville Gibb)*; *A Taste of Art (Carol Perry/Broken River Painters)*; *Coin Collectors (Alex Adkins)*; *Demystifying Psychology (Jane Rushworth)*; *The News – Fact or Fiction (Brian Harker)*.

The following new courses have also been added to our 2020 program:

Be Connected* Drop-In *Margaret Jenkins and Bill Parris*

The U3A room (with NBN Wi Fi) and rostered 'Be Connected' mentors will be available to assist U3A members who would like some help with their device. There will usually be a 'theme' for the session; members will be encouraged to use Be Connected* modules and the course will evolve according to needs.

Days: 1st & 3rd Monday Time: 10:00 am to 12:00 noon Place: U3A Meeting Room

Contact: Margaret Jenkins 57627944 and Bill Parris 0417 329 278

*Be Connected is an Australian Government initiative targeting people over 55 years comprising online learning modules which help to make the most out of being online.

German - Conversation

Janet Martens and Pauline Bailey

This informal group is suitable for those who attended German in 2019 and for those who already have an understanding of the language. Fluent speakers are encouraged to join.

Tech Savvy Apple Devices - Intermediate

Jenny Sawyer

Tech Savvy Apple (Intermediate) is for people who have completed the Tech Savvy Beginners Course and wish to further their understanding and skills on their iPads. The course content will in the main be driven by the participants; whereby they can suggest explorations of different functions they wish to learn about and master.

Tech Savvy Talks – Thank you, Les



Members of the Tech Savvy Talkers Malcolm, Len, Bill and Neville are pictured here with retiring convenor Les Rodgers following his very interesting presentation on ['How the modern broadcasting tower at Mt Wellington near Hobart came into being'](#) and his role in relation to this. Thank you so much for convening Tech Savvy Talks and the Tech Savvy Talkers sessions first at Rustik cafe, then at 'The Northo', for the past few years, Les. We understand that you need to let go of the reins. We have learnt so much from you and even though you won't be at the helm, look forward to your continued input as a class member.

Community News - Pat Treleven

Congratulations to U3A member Pat Treleven on winning the Open Section of Benalla Festival's Writing Festival Competition for the second time. Pat's writing skills are evident in the delightful newsletter reports she writes for the Recorder Group each month. Congratulations, Pat.



Pat is captured here reading her winning story to the audience at Benalla Library.

What's On

Tuesday, 7 January 2020

10:00 Summer School - 'Be Connected'

Thursday, 9 January 2020

10:00 Summer School - Patchwork

Friday, 10 January 2020

10:30 Summer School - Community Singing

Monday, 13 January 2020

09:30 U3A Enrolment Day – Seniors Community Centre Auditorium

09:45 Life Ball

Tuesday, 14 January 2020

10:00 Summer School - Be Connected

Wednesday, 15 January 2020

09:30 U3A Enrolment Day – Seniors Community Centre Auditorium

Friday, 17 January 2020

10:30 Summer School - Community Singing

Monday, 20 January 2020

09:45 Lifeball

Tuesday, 21 January 2020

10:00 Summer School - 'Be Connected'

Thursday, 23 January 2020

10:00 Summer School - Patchwork

Friday, 24 January 2020

10:30 Summer School - Community Singing

Monday, 27 January 2020

09:45 Lifeball

Saturday, 1 February 2020

13:30 Saturday Games - '500'

Monday, 3 February 2020

09:30 Exercises for Fun

09:45 Life Ball

10:00 Be Connected Drop In

10:00 Art Appreciation

13:30 Games

16:00 Meditation

Tuesday, 4 February 2020

10:00 Page Turners

10:00 Stock and Land

14:00 Armchair Traveller

14:00 Let's Talk Books

Wednesday, 5 February 2020

09:30 Play Reading

14:00 Tech Savvy Apple Devices - Intermediate

Thursday, 6 February 2020

10:00 Singing for Fun

13:00 Patchwork

Friday, 7 February 2020

09:30 Sustainability

14:00 Investment