



U3A LOWER NORTH

Sharing Skills and Experience with Friends

APRIL 2011



TERM TWO

University of the Third Age Lower North Incorporated



Post Office Box 480, Clare, South Australia, 5453



Phone 0439 139 868, Email u3alowernorth@gmail.com

Secretary: Lynton Phillips 8842 3385, 0427 344 126, lynphill@tpg.com.au

Course Co-ordinator: Val Tilbrook 8842 2465, 0448 183 748, valtil@bigpond.com

Chair, newsletter & website: Claire Eglinton, 8842 3939, eclair76@bigpond.com

Publicity Officer: Justin Brady 8843 9212, elizabethbrady3@bigpond.com

U3A Lower North website: www.u3alowernorth.webs.com

Dear Members,

Greetings from my millipede-infested hollow in the Clare Valley. This year my garden produced a bumper crop of plums, millipedes and Golden Orb spiders.

The last newsletter was in late November. Since then some of us met up at the end of year party and left inspired by Ian Roberts's choice of film, *Young at Heart*. Thank you to everyone who helped behind the scenes, setting up and packing away. Every year the spread of food seems to get better.

More recently we held our group leaders evening: this time a barbecue at the lovely home of Lynton and Jo Phillips. This is an annual event to allow group leaders and committee members to mix and exchange ideas. Once again committee members worked well as a team to make it all happen. Not bad as they had spent most of the afternoon at a meeting.

Group leaders and their assistants are a vital part of our organisation and always deserve our thanks. But thanks also to all those conscientious members who turn up early and put the kettle on or leave late after packing everything away. We all have a part to play.

Gerald Moore announced the U3A Art Group has been invited back to exhibit at Gally's, Farrell Flat. This time it will be part of the South Australian Living Artists (SALA) season which falls in Term 3.

Gerald will again be teaching the **Art Tutorial** group at Auburn. They will start one week later (17/18 May) than the rest of us and run for 5 weeks. The **Art Group** will fill in for the remaining 2 weeks of term.

The first **Artists Studio Visit** on Thursday 19 May will be to Venturas Visions, Auburn. Gallery owner Tracy Vanderpeer says the exhibition by Duncan Crawford will be both thought-provoking and inspiring. Another visit on 16 June is yet to be finalised by group leader Anne Weddle.

The **Book Group** is still kicking up a ruckus on alternate Thursdays at the Clare library with **Cryptic Crosswords** filling in the fortnightly gaps at Greta's home in Edward Street. Peter and Janet Witham will again host **Chess** at Solsken, Spring Gully Road.

Bridge players continue to hone their skills up at the St Barnabas' church hall with Eleanor Thomas

Ron Bevan, our ever-cheerful tutor in Mandarin **Chinese**, extends the invitation to take in beginners this term. Once any beginners start, the door in the Great Wall closes again for some time so, if you are interested, grab the opportunity while it is there.

Coffee & Chat has proved so popular that they have had to put up the 'No Vacancy' sign with no new enrolments accepted. First venue remains a mystery at this stage but members will be notified.

Last term the members attending the "Come & Try Golf" day were certainly well treated. Because of low enrolments (and only half turned up), the remainder received 4 sessions of tuition instead of one. This term everyone has an opportunity to "**Come & Try Croquet**" on Tuesday 10 May. Thanks to Rae Gierke.

U3A's **Computing** gurus, Sue Mayfield and Carole Dunk, will accept continuing and new students at the

Domain on Wednesdays. Many bring along their own laptops so Sue and Carole have had to become conversant with all versions of operating systems and software. I dips me lid to 'em. Please mail \$30 room hire or arrive early with exact money to first class.

French continues at the Domain with most attending both of the back-to-back classes. (They need the extra time to fit in all their coffee and chatting.)

Two good movies coming up at Blyth for the **Film Group**. *The King's Speech* on Tuesday 10 May doesn't need my recommendation after all its success at recent awards ceremonies on both sides of the Atlantic. This is a 'must watch' film. One thing to ponder while you watch: was it fair for Geoffrey Rush to be nominated as merely a supporting actor while Colin Firth was nominated as lead actor? They were both great but Firth's silent anguish earned the Oscar. The action stays in UK with *Made in Dagenham* on 14 June but it is now 1968 at the Ford motor plant and the women employees want equal pay for equal work. Another true story and hard social issue softened with humour to make fine British entertainment.

Good to see some new blood for Barrie Smith's excellent **Furniture Restoration, French Polishing and Woodwork** class. A wonderful way to have some expert advice on your latest DIY project.

Gunther and Margaret Bayha and friends continue their weekly catch-up at the Domain. Native born and more recent **German** speakers welcome.

The Friday **History Group** enlivened first term by escaping their TAFE classroom for an outing to Urrbrae House and Carrick Hill, two significant homes in SA's history from two very different eras.

Mah-jong has been fortunate to retain tutor Jocelyn Macrow who proved you can have your mah-jong and eat as well by fitting her new job around her U3A commitments. Will the luck continue?

Scrabble is now off the ground and a few keen players led by Carole Stewart are meeting at 1.15 on Monday afternoons at St Barnabas' church hall.

Mosaics out at Donnybrook has attracted some interest from Burra members looking to learn a little before starting something similar in their home town.

Petanque seems to maintain a workable number however **Walking Group** numbers are down. That is a pity because it is something we all should be doing more of as you will see in the article on our back page. It is not just about being fitter: it can help you remember names and find your keys. Yes, you best read that back page.

Jewellery at Burra

We are starting off Burra with a jewellery course pencilled in for Tuesday mornings. Tutor Alice Keane has 20 years experience and you may have seen her work at the local market. Students will be able to complete a basic bracelet and or necklace and Alice can even teach us how to mend our own jewellery. (That was my request and to make the trip worthwhile, by term end, I intend to have lunched at every Burra watering hole if anyone wants to join me.)

U3A received a warm reception at Burra Probus with a couple of members offering to do future classes (Burra history and haiku). Tony Maio, Burra School principal, has been most supportive about hosting computer classes. Unfortunately they have not yet emerged from the turmoil of a major building project which has stretched teaching space to the limit. Under the circumstances, we are postponing any classes there until Term 3. Any interested Burra people, please let me know what you want to learn about computing or anything else.

Dates & Dues

Our second term starts a week later and ends a week earlier than schools. This gives us our now standard 8-week term. **Term 2:** Monday 9 May to Friday 1 July. **Term 3:** Monday 1 August to Friday 23 September. **Term 4:** Monday 17 October to Friday 9 December which is also the date for our end-of-year break-up lunch and movie.

You can always find U3A dates and events on our website: www.u3alownorth.webs.com.

The idea of an enrolment day or days in the future, has the support of the committee and particularly Val who has been doing all the legwork. Most other U3As do this so expect it in 2012. We prefer payments made by cheque (we will look into direct debit) but, for the moment, if you do have to pay fees in cash, please have exact amount and, if it must be left with a group leader, place in envelope clearly marked with name and amount. For a receipt, include a stamped, s.a.e. Group leaders are very obliging but most don't want the hassle of handling money.

Members who haven't paid 2011 subs are officially finger-smacking late as they fell due in February.

Happy holidays to everyone but do fill in those forms now so we can prepare for second term and don't forget the space for suggestions on the reverse.

See you back in the classroom,
Claire

Walk for your brain's sake

This information from About.com explains walking improves memory and brain health in older adults:

Are you having more senior moments, when words remain stuck to the tip of your tongue or you can't recall a name? Perhaps you should try taking a walk.

Recently, psychologists found that regular walking (and other aerobic exercise) can improve memory by expanding the hippocampus, a part of the brain that plays a vital role in forming and storing memories.

The hippocampus of a healthy adult starts to atrophy and shrink around age 55 or 60. This study was of 120 men and women, healthy but sedentary, average age mid-60s, divided into two groups. One group walked around a track 3 times a week, eventually working up to 40 minutes per session. The other group did yoga, resistance training, and other less aerobic exercises.

After a year, brain scans showed the walking group had increased the size of their hippocampus an average of 2%: the equivalent to a reversal in age-related brain shrinkage of about one to two years.

In the other group, the size of the hippocampus had decreased by about 1.4%, a normal rate of decline in healthy older adults, who typically experience hippocampus shrinkage of between 1% and 2% per year. For people with some form of mild cognitive impairment, an annual decline in hippocampus volume of 3% to 5% would be fairly common.

Kirk Erickson, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Pittsburgh and lead author of the study, said "We can change the brain in older adults. It's amazing that a one-year period of moderate exercise isn't just slowing down the atrophy, it's actually reversing it."

Both groups also showed improvement in spatial memory, but the walkers improved more than those in the non-aerobic exercise group. We use spatial memory to remember where we put our car keys, how to navigate traffic and find the supermarket, and which aisle our favourite cereal is on.

Many studies have shown that exercise can improve cognitive function, but this is the first to show that aerobic exercise can actually increase brain size, said Erickson. Older adults can also benefit from many other forms of exercise, such as strength, balance and stretching exercises, even though they may not have a direct positive effect on memory and brain size.

Many questions remain unanswered. Researchers still don't know if exercise can reverse brain atrophy and memory loss in people who are older than the study group nor if walking longer or exercising more vigorously will show even more benefits over time. Still, the researchers were delighted to find that it may be possible to increase hippocampus size, slow memory loss and improve spatial memory in older adults with exercise.

So the good news is that even moderate efforts, like walking 30-40 minutes a few times a week, can bring significant benefits. Requiring no special equipment, training or location, walking has to be the easiest form of exercise we can do as we get older. No gym needed, just a pair of shoes.

Anyone who wants to try it, only has to join the Monday morning U3A Walking Group. I can assure you they never do anything as boring as walk around a track. Let us know if you want a beginners group, starting at a slower pace.

(Thanks to the About.com senior living website)

Your Suggestions:

Please give us your suggestions for possible future courses, teachers, venues, events or anything else on which you may care to comment.

2011: SECOND TERM ACTIVITIES

- Art Tutorial**, Gerald Moore, Tues. & Wed., 9.30 am -1.30 pm, starts 17/18 May, 5 weeks, Auburn.....
- Art Group**, Tuesdays 9.30 am -1.30 pm, starts 21 June, Auburn.....
- Book Group**, Greta Handmer, alternate Thursdays, 10.30 am - 12 noon, starts 5 May, Clare Library
- Chess**, Mondays 4 pm, starts 10 May, Janet & Peter Witham's Solsken, Spring Gully Road, Clare.....
- Chinese** (spoken Mandarin), Ron Bevan, Mondays 10 am, starts 9 May, Domain. Beginners accepted....
- Coffee & Chat Club**, Val Tilbrook, Wednesdays 10.30 am, starts 11 May venue t.b.a (no vacancies).....
- Computing**, Sue Mayfield, Wednesdays 10 am - 12, starts 11 May, Domain \$30 room hire
- Contract Bridge**, Eleanor Thomas, Thursdays 3 pm, starts 12 May, St Barnabas' hall. No beginners.....
- Croquet: Come & Try**, 10 am, Tuesday 10 May. Rae Gierke 8842 1043.
- Cryptic Crosswords**, Greta Handmer 8842 2065, alt. Thursdays, 10.30 am, starts 12 May, 25 Edward St
- Film Group**, Val Tilbrook, second Tuesday of month, 1.30 pm, Blyth Cinema.....
- *French Back to Basics**, Claire Eglinton, Thursdays, 12-1.15 pm, starts 12 May, Domain
- *French**, Claire Eglinton, Thursdays, 1.30-3.30 pm, starts 12 May, Domain.....
- Furniture Restoration, etc.**, Barrie Smith, Wednesdays 10 am - 12 noon, starts 11 May, Lakeside.....
- *German Conversation**, Gunther Bayha, Mondays, 2-4 pm, starts 9 May, Domain
- History: local & Aust.**, Val Tilbrook, Fridays, 10 am - 12 noon, starts 13 May, Tafe.....
- Jewellery**, Alice Keane, Tuesdays, 10 am - 12, starts 10 May, Burra
- Mah-jong**, Jocelyn Macrow, Wednesdays 2-4 pm, starts 11 May, St Barnabas' Hall
- Mosaics**, Halima Northeast, Fri. 10 am - 1 pm, starts 13 May, 9 Kingfisher Drive, Clare.....
- Petanque**, Malcolm Weddle, Mondays 1.30 - 3.30 pm, starts 9 May, Catford Garden.....
- Scrabble**, Carole Stewart, Mondays 1.15 pm, starts 9 May, St Barnabas' Church Hall.
- Walking Group**, Greta Handmer 8842 2065, Mondays 8 am, starts 9 May, meet east end Lennon St.....
- *French and German groups presume some prior learning.

Venues: 'Domain' is Domain Internet Café, 202 Main North Road, Clare
'Tafe' is Clare TAFE campus, 155 Main North Road, Clare
'Auburn' is Auburn Recreation Park rooms, Saddleworth Road
'Burra' is St Mary's Anglican Church hall.



TO ENROL: *return this section to Course Co-ordinator, Val Tilbrook, before Tuesday 3 May at P.O. Box 480, Clare SA 5453, or phone 8842 2465, mobile 0448 183 748, or email valtil@bigpond.com.*

Enrol me in the following group/s: _____

Name: _____ Current Member? Yes [] No []

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____ Year of birth: _____

Please tick to receive future newsletters by email [] (only if you have not done so before).

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