



# O.W.L.S.

OLDER WISER LEARNING SENIORS



## President's piece Andy Fechner

Volume 10 Issue 6  
June 2020

### Management committee members

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### Friends of the committee

If you would like to join with the following people who have nominated that they will help where they can at occasional events, outings and functions, your involvement will be most welcome.

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| June Carey    | Patricia Castles |
| Carol Castles | Denice Knight    |
| Rita Evans    | Rosemary Ryan    |

To register as a friend of the committee, please contact Andy Fechner

- P 5541 2072  
E andyfechner@bigpond.com



Member of U3A Network Queensland

Like the majority of our members, I am tiring of the restrictions which have impacted so severely on our activities and general way of life. Please rest assured that your committee and course tutors are doing all that we can to be ready for resumption of courses when circumstances permit. We are in regular contact with our venue operators, who in turn are bound by Government decisions as to when they can make their facilities available.

In the meantime, many of our groups are "meeting" online, or in private facilities as permitted. The current 1.5 metre distancing rule is the main stumbling block for many of our activities. Just think about your activity and how this requirement affects your chosen course. Venue operators will be bound by the requirements to provide cleaned facilities, sanitisers, and follow distancing and capacity rules. We are doing the best we can by purchasing access to U3A Online courses, providing them free to our members. Have a look at page 2 of this newsletter for more information about some of the activities on offer.

I know you will join with me in considering those who have been affected more than us, business operators who can no longer trade, individuals subsequently losing employment, and so many others. In closing, at the risk of sounding hard-hearted and cynical, I wonder if this whole exercise was taken (and is still being taken) a little too far. The death rate as a percentage of known infections has been relatively miniscule and has impacted mainly on those with underlying health problems. This seems little different to the annual flu mortality results, and that has never been handled in the same way. In saying that, I support the Australian Government's decisions to deal with the covid threat by declaring it a pandemic, and closing our international borders. I think we are now seeing a fair bit of political grandstanding over a health threat which the Queensland Chief Health Officer has admitted will never be entirely eliminated. We need to pursue every avenue to get our economy back on track.

Till next edition

Andy



Best wishes for a very **happy birthday** to our members celebrating birthdays in June:

- |               |                  |                   |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Anne Andrews  | Ray Arthy        | Joyce Baskerville |
| Lyn Bruce     | Russ Davidson    | Paul Deeran       |
| Margaret Dunn | Albert Fawcett   | Sue Ferguson      |
| Ray Folley    | Margaret George  | Sandy Grieve      |
| Lois Jackson  | Norma Kellett    | Barbara Love      |
| Pat Norman    | Marcia Pain      | Virginia Parker   |
| Peter Rewko   | Sandi Schumacher | Marian Schwarz    |
| Jan Skelton   |                  |                   |

If your birthday is in June and is not listed above, please let us know so we can update our records and include you.

### Notice from the Association of Psychiatrists

Dear citizens,  
During the quarantine it is considered normal to talk to your plants and pets. Kindly contact us only if they reply.

Thank you

Not much on the supermarket shelves yesterday so I decided to improvise.

Dinner last night was a risotto I made with some mushrooms I foraged for locally.

Not only was it delicious, but soon after a Welsh male voice choir of purple elephants showed up and sang the whole of Meatloaf's *Bat out of Hell* album, accompanied by a light show.



## Current courses - term two

20 April-26 June 2020

Course coordinator | Tina Jones

Phone 0418 780 861 | Email t.j.16@bigpond.com

## Nordic walking/walking - still in action!

Meet by the pool/library Monday, Wednesday, Friday, walk 6.30 am-7.30 am. Nordic walkers will require a pair of poles, comfortable sports walking shoes, bottle of water. Walkers - poles not needed.

Contact Liz 0488 155 506

## Something new to try during lockdown - U3A Online

Have you checked put what is on offer from U3A OnLine?

We now have five courses available to our members:

Australia Flora

The Night Sky

Creative writing: Genealogy

Play Ukulele by Ear

Intro to IT

To check out all the courses on offer from OnLine, google U3A OnLine, select our courses/ independent study courses then scroll down the full list.

If you would like to participate in any of these courses (at no cost to you) , please contact our course coordinator, Tina Jones, mobile 0418 780 861, email t.j.16@bigpond.com.

### A little GEM

contributed by Andy

You may have already opened the link to the U3A OnLine newsletter "GEMS" which was

sent recently, but if not, I thought that the following quote which was on the cover sheet is a great one for our generation:

From a parent to an adult child: "Don't laugh at me when I

ask you to help me with computer stuff, just remember that it was me who taught you how to use a spoon!"

If you haven't had a look at this publication which we now distribute to our members, I strongly encourage you to do so. We receive it because our U3A is a member of U3A OnLine. We have currently sourced online courses from them, and are offering them free to our members.

## Discussion group online forum

Cheryl Folley

DOROTHY – (an interesting addition to recent Anzac Day stories and tales of war)

During World War II we lived in a cottage on Exmoor, fronting directly on to the road with dry stone walls extending around the cottage and along both sides of the road. The moor was used as a training ground for tanks, troops, overseas soldiers, even the Home Guard. I was about five years old at the time and I remember one day finding my mother at the window holding dad's shotgun, shaking violently. Coming up the road were lines of men, crouching in the shadows of the stone walls as they moved.

We'd been warned in the early part of the war that an invasion was a possibility and given instructions on what to do – as owners of one of the few telephones in the area we were to sound the alarm and then cut off the phone. Mum was definitely ready to front the enemy. Then there came a rough Essex voice: "Don't 'ee shoot us missus, us be the Home Guard."

RAY – This week I watched the last current episode of *You can't ask that* on ABCTV - interviews with children - and something every adult should watch as there were some real home truths as well as laughs. Some quotes below:

**Do adults know more than kids?** No, because we have been at school and you have just been at home doing whatever you do.

No, you wouldn't be able to figure out your phones without us (fairly unanimous).

**What is your parents' influence?**

We are going to be making the important decisions and this (our parents') generation is not really setting

us up for it.

You aren't listening to us (you are always on mobiles, technology). Mum, stop using your mobile and listen to me. (Again, a reaction from many of the children – a lesson here perhaps?) Parents should realise we don't just take your looks, we take the whole of what you do.

**Have you had the birds and the bees session?**

What's that? I have heard of birds and bees but not together.

Well, I know there is a station and a destination

It's also called "The Talk".

**What happens when you die?**

You have a funeral. You stop breathing. You go to heaven. It could be just dark forever. You could come back as a frog. I've been to a lot of funerals; it might be sad but you get to eat a lot of food.

**What advice would you give to parents?**

Stop looking so worried. Chill out more and enjoy yourselves.

At one stage the kids were asked about the "Olden Days". Way back then, said one child, in the 1980s, the clothing fashions were awful and the music terrible. People were a lot more racist then.



RON - Last Wednesday I was about to cross the road at the traffic lights on the eastern side of Brisbane Street/William Street intersection when I looked left and saw a backpack on the road about a metre out from the gutter. Curiosity is a strange thing so I investigated a little more and saw that the grate was up and someone was in the hole. There was also an arm out of the hole holding what appeared to me to be a cigarette end. In the hole was a person with a hoodie on. I couldn't see any more of the person but I was worried that someone would turn the corner and try to take the car park on which the bag sat. That did happen.

The lesson is: Please be aware of this as it may happen elsewhere in town. On investigation I was told that the person was probably looking for "dumpsters" which I am told

are unsmoked cigarette ends.

I'm sure I speak for all of us when I say a big Thank You to Cheryl for all the hard work she does in getting us to submit our articles and then editing them. It is nothing short of amazing !!

## Discussion group online forum (contd)

Cheryl Folley

ANDY - I have something good to say about the COVID 19 lockdown/ social distancing which has been in effect now since the end of March. I have been saving money...or at least spending a lot less. No more

lunches or dinners out, no more trips to the movies, no more impulse buys in shopping centres, and way less spent on fuel. Even though fuel has been cheap, we have not been allowed to go anywhere! In turn, I have been buying plenty of fuel for the mowers and the tractor, and I think we can safely say that the lawns, gardens and paddocks have never looked better. With winter on the way I have had plenty of time to cut and split firewood in readiness.

On another note, the COVID curse has meant I could not visit my mum on Mother's day, as lockdown rules in her nursing home on the Coast limit visits to one visit by two people per day. In addition, the visits can only be for 30 minutes which tends to make a 2.5 hour round trip even more wearing. However, I shall be there the day after.

## Nordic walking



Nordic walking has been the only one of our groups that has not had to suspend its morning activities and Liz, Jane, Joan and Debbie recently went up to the Wayaralong Dam to walk.

If you would like to join this group, as a Nordic walker or just a walker, contact Liz, 0488 155 506 or email [brizzie@bigpond.com](mailto:brizzie@bigpond.com).

*Jane taking in some more of the beautiful scenery the Nordic walkers enjoy on their walks - King Coolum Reserve*



*Debbie and Joan take a break to enjoy the scenery*

## BUGs

The weather has been perfect for our avid gardeners. Seedlings are now available for purchase and the prices do not appear to have risen at all so no excuse to not get out there and get winter vege seedlings in. (Too hard for me to grow from seed, prefer to get mine at the ready to be planted stage!) Liz has been creative and has taken recycling to the limit with her planter bicycle; her hanging basket is a blaze of colour. Shirley shows her talent for creativity and recycling - her reborn wheelbarrow is evidence of that.



Wendy has also been busy in her garden (below and right).



How many of you are forever waging war against the cockatoos who take a liking to your trees and plants? We have a big flock of about 40 of them flying and screeching over our house every morning around 6.00 am. Our neighbours put bird food out on their back lawn and I think word has travelled around the area to say the buffet is open! The only thing is they do like a bit of fresh greenery with their meals and they have eaten the tops out of my small dracaenas.

Breakfast is on us  
Cockatoos 2  
Yvonne 0

## News from Brisbane

Judith Zaugg

I very much appreciate receiving and reading your U3A newsletter and catching up with the Beaudesert news. A lot has happened since my move into Sherwood mid November but who could have foreseen what was ahead.

U3A Brisbane is also on hold for the foreseeable future so that for me was short lived as well. My new choir, Cheep Trill, was unable to progress to our Earth Day performance but I loved all our practice sessions and meeting new friends. Both of these social events enabled me to feel confident about starting up again when this virus is under control.

I'm pretty much in lockdown as well, but my son Jason takes care of all my needs and being only in the next suburb I sometimes walk to his place and chat over the fence.

(Right) is a photo of my 'spot the bear' on my balcony which joins in with the neighbourhood, amusing us on our exercise walk.



## For sale

Beaudesert U3A member Pip Harris, has a 3-seater settee and a recliner chair for sale. Made of Italian cream-colour leather both the chair and the settee are in excellent condition. This furniture is now surplus to her requirements.

Asking price \$50 for the pair.

Please contact Pip, mobile 0416 720 855 or further information.



## Book Review - The Changing Mind by Daniel Levitin

Daniel Levitin

contributed by Marg Arnold

Although I have called this article a book review, it is more accurately a summary of an interview with the author. It's from the program *All in the Mind* hosted by Sana Qadar on Radio National.

Dan Levitin is a Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Macgill University, Montreal, Canada.

I will paraphrase his comments.

Twenty years ago it was thought old age was a time of decline with your skills and abilities crumbling away. However, evidence is older adults improve in many abilities every decade after 60.

In his book Levitin says in a survey asking elderly people at what age they were happiest, they most often selected age 62! The survey didn't ask why, but Levitin suggested that starting around 60 structural and chemical changes occur in the brain which cause us to focus more on gratitude, empathy, compassion and a bias toward positivity. An example he gives is that the amygdala, a fear centre of the brain, shrinks and this and other brain changes converge to make us generally happier.

Sana asked what are the most important personality traits for ageing well. Levitin's list includes:

resilience, curiosity, conscientiousness and compassion. Of course genetics plays an important role in personality traits but it is possible to improve one's capacity for the big four.

One of the most successful ways, Levitin believes, is through cognitive behavioural therapy. Below is a brief summary of his comments on the various traits.

Some cultures encourage **resilience**, eg the belief that we can get through a national or personal calamity. When reading this I thought it interesting to compare societal responses to COVID19 in various countries – some angry, some stoic.

**Conscientiousness** is a leading predictor of how well we will fare at any age. This is a cluster of traits revolving around such things as dependability, reliability, finishing what you start, following through on what you say you will do, and following societal rules (presumably when they are fair and sensible I feel I must add). Conscientious adults follow at least a modicum of rules and rarely end up in prison. They are less likely to be involved in accidents. When they see a doctor they are compliant with medication. Levitin mentions that many doctors complain to him about their patients not taking their medication consistently.

**Curiosity** is being open to new ideas, experiences and wanting to learn. Levitin says "learning new things and skills is one of the best things you can do to keep your brain healthy and active". (I guess that is a major reason we are all in U3A). Interestingly he says whilst one can't prevent getting Alzheimer's if you have the genetics for it, you can put off showing the symptoms of it through building up a cognitive reserve. You could live with Alzheimer's for years and not know it and no one else would know it either. He cites the example of American singer Glen Campbell who continued to perform brilliantly although his memory for other things was very poor and he was quite disoriented. (Doubtful benefit I think. Do I want to keep line dancing but not be able to find my way to The Centre?)

Regarding memory, although our mental processes slow with ageing due to demyelination (thinning of insulation of the neurones) with every decade after 40, making it more difficult to recall names or words eg, we get there eventually. Levitin says this shows our memory is intact, it's just that the pathway to it is disrupted. Research has indicated that stress has an important, negative impact on memory.

Contd on page 5

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## Thank you to all of our sponsors



4



## Mosaics (contd)



(Left and below) Robyn has finished a scene using some beautiful colours and also almost finished a mannequin covered with bits of jewellery and glass tiles making a play of light and dark shades of the same colour.



(Above) Tina has decorated this small terracotta pot with a colourful mix of tiles and glass.



(Above) Jan has decorated this lovely pot decorated with beads and trinkets from her jewellery stash. This is now a candle holder.



## CV19 claims my "spare" time

Ron Burgess

matter doing crossword and puzzles in the *Women's Weekly* (that come my way) and in the *Sunday Courier*. Since 2015 I have been addicted to adult colouring-in.

Since the advent of coronavirus shut down of social gatherings, my daughter, Ruth, has decided that with the

Over the years I have been using the old grey

Over the years I have been using the old grey

overwhelming time I have on my hands, to give me projects to do for her. To date I have stripped back and repainted two outdoor seats with, in progress, a plant stand, and to come a three-piece outdoor seat and table setting. All have to be fitted in with my leisure time of housekeeping, gardening, reading, snoozing, etc.

I look forward to returning to regular social life.

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PEOPLE KEEP ASKING  
"IS COVID 19 REALLY THAT SERIOUS?"

LISTEN UP

CASINOS AND CHURCHES ARE CLOSED

WHEN HEAVEN AND HELL  
AGREE ON THE SAME THING

IT'S PROBABLY PRETTY SERIOUS

I'm either coming out of this quarantine 20 lbs lighter, chakras balanced & a house full of completed craft projects Or.... 20 lbs heavier with a drinking problem. 🍷

We thought we'd have flying cars by 2020.

But no, here we are teaching people how to wash their hands