

Coffs Harbour U3A Inc.
PO Box 1596
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450



Email: info@coffs.u3anet.org.au
Web site: www.coffs.u3anet.org.au

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2015

President's Report

To my fellow members,

Once again classes are restarting after a holiday break. Best wishes to all for more weeks of fellowship and discovery.

I had a great learning experience in May when I enjoyed a short holiday in southern Queensland and was able to attend the 2015 U3A International Conference. It was inspiring to hear from U3A groups from different countries and to appreciate the huge appreciation of U3A among many cultures. The speakers presented varied subjects and there were plenty of opportunities for social networking. We all had so much in common and yet there were so many ideas to share. As in our own NSW Network 2015 Conference accent was placed on the need for all people (definitely including us seniors!) to appreciate the fact that IT skills at some level are the path of the present era. We are encouraged to endeavour to hold appropriate training for our members. Coffs Harbour has held some computer training classes for a number of years. To offer increased tuition in basic skills we need volunteer class facilitators – if there is anyone out there who may be able to give additional assistance in relating subjects during 2016 the Coffs Harbour Committee would be delighted to hear from you.

At this time of year your committee is beginning to plan for 2016. After the Annual General Meeting committee members may well change but we are already faced with some “landlord” requests to nominate class accommodation requirements. This is, as always, a tricky situation because at this stage, we have no clear indication as to (a) the number of classes available in 2016 and (b) the number of members we may have!! One thing we do know is that some room hire rates are set to increase in this new financial year. Given that many have noticed increased overheads in their private lives such additional cost to room hire is no surprise. However it does mean that our U3A budget requirements will increase and necessitate a review of membership fees.

As you know all committee positions will be declared vacant at the August Annual General Meeting and members are invited to nominate as office holders or as committee members. Not all of the current committee intend to nominate so new committee members are required. I do suggest that members who may consider holding office, but have some nervousness in doing so because of lack of knowledge of U3A procedures, may care to nominate as ordinary committee members in order to “learn the ropes”. A committee is never a “permanent” fixture and we do need people who are prepared to take office and I am sure it is easier to nominate for, say, “President” if one has some U3A committee experience to their credit. Alternatively you may have an interest in sharing and learning by volunteering as an “assistant” by being willing to assist committee members without holding office yourself. If you have any queries as to how the committee functions please do not hesitate to ask. This is **your** U3A so why not “give it a go”. A committee nomination form is attached to this Newsletter. Please note the closing date details.

“We are the gardeners of our minds and we can choose to cultivate either flowers or weeds.” Let’s grow lots of flowers!!!!

As Vince Frost writes “Aspire to Inspire before you Expire”

Sincerely, Helen Squires

It is always great to hear of ideas that, having been nurtured within the U3A membership, venture out to new opportunities.

Lorna Harling is a U3A Acrylic Art Class student and the winner of the major art prize in the U3A art show and she, joined by other artists, set up a market stall over several weekends to raise an amazing amount of money for “The Young and the Breastless” fund which is administered by Coffs Hospital. This fund is used locally to give a little financial help to recently diagnosed breast cancer patients who may need one less stress at this time.

Although this wasn't a U3A event, it was predominantly Acrylic Art students who helped run the market stall. Andrea Clark (winner of our People’s choice prize) donated her painting “Colours of the Reef” as one of the raffle prizes. People from U3A art classes donated the bulk of the art and craft works for sale. Generous support came from Lesley Burling and Barbara White, facilitators at the Friday art class, together with their students, and from the Woolgoolga art facilitator, all of whom donated paintings and craft.



The U3A Charter

1. **Objective** - The objective of U3As is to impart knowledge and culture in an academic and social context.
2. **Mission** - U3As focus on the cultural and social advancement of seniors as well as and on their well-being.
3. **Public** - U3As are accessible to all seniors irrespective of age, qualifications or means.
4. **Status** - Many U3As guarantee the academic status of their activities by integrating or linking them with higher education establishments, while other U3As have an independent educational status.
5. **Education** - U3As offer courses, conferences and work-shops covering the range of academic subjects taught at universities plus many other topics of local interest.
6. **Health** - U3As aim to promote seniors' health through innovative forms of social, intellectual and physical activity.
7. **Culture** - U3As provide seniors with the tools for a better understanding of our changing society.
8. **Ethics** - U3As focus on reducing all forms of discrimination, particularly those linked to age, sex, ethnicity and religion, and actively campaign against exclusion.
9. **International** - U3As are vehicles for international academic cooperation between seniors in different parts of the world, including the encouragement of visits and reciprocal exchanges.
10. **Future** - U3As contribute to lengthening life expectancy by providing the intellectual and physical conditions for active ageing.

As agreed by the AIUTA/IUATA Governing Board Meeting in Toulouse June 2014

SENIORS WEEK MARCH 2015

It seems quite a while since March but I do want to thank all who participated in, and assisted with, our Seniors Week activities. Each year your committee considers an outreach program and this year the decision was to combine outreach with a celebration for seniors amid a promotion of greater awareness of U3A to the general public and local authorities.

This was a new initiative for our U3A and apart from being a promotion and outreach to the general community it was an opportunity for us to socialise with each other and to encourage and give confidence to those actively participating in events.

The venue was the Coffs Harbour Bunker Cartoon Gallery which was hosted by U3A members throughout Seniors Week 16th to 20th March

Events commenced with an opening night focusing on the Seniors Week Art Exhibition when University of the Third Age artists joined with Bishop Druitt College Primary Students to present interpretations of

“Social issues through artistic expressions.....a meeting of the Minds.”

Opening day brought a great deluge of rain yet, despite inclement weather, I understand that attendance on opening night was the most populated event the Bunker Cartoon Gallery had experienced to date.

The art work remained on display for a number of weeks following the gallery practice. During the days of Seniors Week daily class demonstrations and entertainment were presented. A social afternoon on Friday 20th March culminated the week's events and included entertainment presented by the U3A Ukulele Group, presentation of awards, and refreshment (an unofficial survey would suggest that profiteroles are CoffsU3A's No.1 afternoon tea favourite!!) It was great to share the afternoon together.

Congratulations to all members who exhibited their work and/or participated in group activities. I heard so many comments from people who found new confidence in “going public”.

This was the most complex event we have ventured to stage and there were challenges! We applied for a Seniors Week financial grant from the NSW government but the application was unsuccessful which led us to curtail some activities to meet a reduced budget. The Coffs Harbour Council did provide a grant and great assistance was received from the Bunker Cartoon Gallery. A big thankyou to the gallery management and volunteers, both for practical assistance and monetary savings, in relation to publicity and facilities provided. As always a group of committee members provided much time and use of their communication facilities free of charge.

For my part the pleasure for the week was hearing heart warming stories from U3A members relating how their U3A involvement has opened new doors to expanded knowledge and friendship.

Helen Squires, President.

Seniors Week at the Bunker Cartoon Gallery March 2015

Our contribution this year to Seniors Week was a big splash not only did we showcase some of our classes we also put on a great Art Exhibition in collaboration with Bishop Druitt Primary College.

The committee looked for a theme for the exhibition that would bridge the generations, linking concerns of younger and older citizens and came up with

“Social Issues through Artistic Expression“

The Winners;

Overall winner; Lorna Harling “Escape from Suburbia“. Lorna wanted to express the freedom she feels living in regional Australia away from the pressure of city living.

First in Watercolour; Jan Turner “Droving the Long Paddock“. Jan was moved by the terrible plight of farmers and animals in times of drought.

First in Acrylic; Andrea Clark “On Flanders Field“. Andrea painted beautiful poppies growing in soil drenched with the tragedy of war.

First in Pastel; Don Mackenzie “Boat People“. Don commented that we are all boat people.

The judge made one Highly Commended award; John Clingan for his “Person of Influence” John Howard.

The following three people also gained Commendations; Judith Estell [2], Rosie Ward and Reiko Warren.

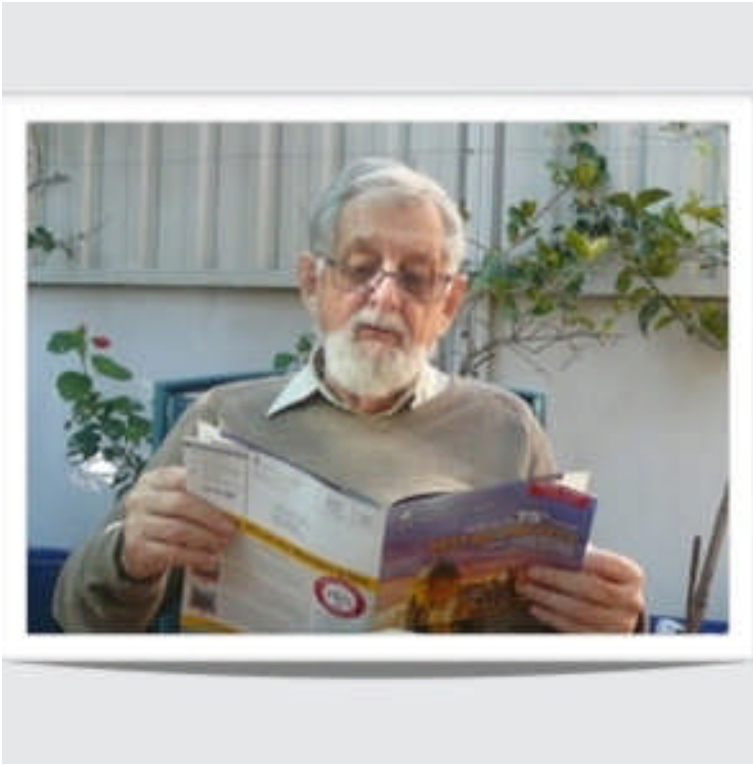
and finally

The “People’s Choice” Awards went to; Andrea Clark; “...with the Flow”, a collage, mixed media with ink making a statement about the future of our oceans, and

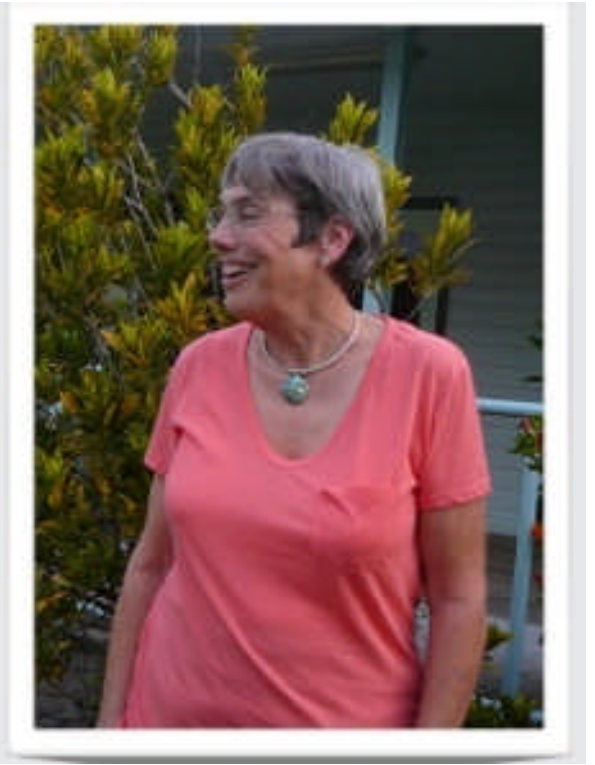
Bryce Stafford [Bishop Druitt] “Geoff the Giraffe”.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to all the members who exhibited their work, to those facilitators who brought their classes to the Gallery, to those who braved the rain for the opening night, and all those who came to look and support this venture.

Lesley Meredith, Publicity Officer.



Don Mackenzie



Jan Turner



Lorna Harling & Andrea Clark

NEWS FROM THE SECRETARY

- We recently received a letter from U3A Norfolk Island advertising some of the historic events that will be occurring in the future. They have combined with the Norfolk Island Travel Centre to plan a program for U3A members and for every booking made, the travel centre will donate \$10 to U3A N.I. If any member was planning a trip to Norfolk in late 2015 or 2016 they might consider getting in touch with the U3A or the travel centre at the following www.norfolkislandtravelcentre.com and www.norfolkisland.u3anet.org.au
- We also received a newsletter from an organisation called MindVentures which is based in Queensland. Some of you might already know about their programs which include day programs in Brisbane and short trips to areas in Queensland. If you are interested, the website is www.mindventures.com.au
- In May, Ray Wilson and I attended the U3A Network AGM and Conference in Mittagong, hosted by U3A Southern Highlands. At the AGM, reports were received from the Executive and nominations for 2015-16 office-bearers and committee members were declared elected. Our area representative, Des Davis, resigned because of ill health and since that time, Lyn Stewart from Gloucester U3A has nominated to be North Coast Area Representative. During the Conference we heard some interesting keynote speakers, particularly Hugh Mackay who spoke about belonging to different groups and Tony Whittingham who spoke about Third Age Learning in a Digital World. Ray and I attended different workshops and one that Ray attended on a generic computer program for managing the courses and membership of individual U3As proved very popular. During the later Forum, the matter was again raised and the Network was asked to research the feasibility of providing a management computer program to be used by all NSW U3As. Hopefully such a program will be forthcoming. One of the delights of annual Conferences is the food and once again the participants were extremely well fed. The 2016 AGM and Conference will be hosted by Eastlakes at Swansea, Lake Macquarie.

• ***The City Council have advised us of an increase in the room hire charges at the Community Village, effective from 1st July, 2015. The new charge is \$15.00 per hour for each room which is an increase of \$3.50 per hour!***

- There will no longer be special rates for photocopying services at the Community Village. The new rate, effective from July 1st, is 20 cents for a single A4 sheet. Inquiries at Officeworks and the Neighbourhood Centre indicate that their prices remain at 10 cents per A4 sheet.

Ruth Baker

Geology Course

The U3A Geology course, which has just finished for the year, attracted a large group of very enthusiastic participants. Many of them have travelled widely in Australia and overseas and their experiences and keen observations led to interesting questions being discussed. There were also many photographs and intriguing rock and mineral samples brought in to share with the group. Although a number of participants initially claimed to have very limited geological knowledge, it soon became clear that everyone knew more than they had realised. Nevertheless, geological concepts were clarified and participants left with an increased confidence in their knowledge of geology and the geological history of the Coffs Harbour region.

Our excursion to the rock platform bordering Charlesworth Bay attracted a number of takers and an interesting hour was spent examining the rocks and speculating on their geological significance.

A similar course is planned for 2016.

Rod Nazer, Facilitator



U3A Excursion Group

Participants in the Geology course in their element among the rocks at Charlesworth Bay.

AN EMBARRASSING ADMISSION

During the lifetimes of most of us, we have seen some amazing changes and discoveries in just about every field of knowledge. This is particularly so in Astronomy. Our grandparents thought the entire Universe consisted only of what we see in the Milky Way while we know the Universe is vastly larger, with the Milky Way being only one galaxy amongst billions of others. Our parents, and we as well until a few years ago, only knew of the planets in our own Solar System. Now we know of about 2,000 planets around other stars and believe most stars have planets. The biggest telescope our parents knew was the 200 inch at Mt. Paloma in California. Now Australia is a partner with other countries in constructing both the optical Giant Magellan Telescope, which will be twenty times bigger, and the radio Square Kilometre Array which, as its name suggests, will have a total surface area of a square kilometre.

All this is pretty impressive and worthy of our generation congratulating itself for what certainly is the greatest advance in understanding the Universe in human history. At least it would be so if it were not for the fact that we have also learnt that everything we have looked at, measured, catalogued, analysed and photographed is no more than five per cent of what is there.

So where is the missing 95 per cent? What is it? We don't know that either. Back in the 1960s astronomers found that stars on the outside edges of galaxies travel in orbit around the centre at about the same speed as those near the centre. But that should not occur because gravity rapidly weakens as distance increases. Travelling so fast, the stars at the edge should escape the pull of the galaxy and fly off into space, but they don't. So something must be holding them in place – something just like ordinary matter except we can't see it, sample it, analyse it, photograph it or test it in any way. We call it dark matter and think it might possibly be some kind of sub-atomic particle we haven't discovered yet.

If that were not bad enough, about 16 years ago one of our own astronomers, Professor Brian Schmidt and his team did some clever measuring of distances to exploding stars and found that not only was the whole Universe expanding (as we already knew) but the rate of expansion was speeding up. Unlike dark matter, which holds galaxies together, this new phenomenon was blowing them further and faster apart. Again, we have no idea what is causing this but we call it dark energy. All very embarrassing!

If this interests you and you don't mind the embarrassment, you are welcome to join our weekly Astronomy class every Monday (Community Village, 3:15pm) and learn more embarrassing facts about five per cent of the Universe.

Win Howard Astronomy tutor.

Crossing the Channel

At the end of the last Ice Age, the English Channel formed a barrier which isolated the ancient Britons, no doubt providing some sense of security for those who knew it was there, but a false one as it turned out. The Vikings took the direct route, and it didn't stop the Romans, William the Conqueror or William of Orange (who seems to have come by invitation), but in 1588 it gave the Spanish a lot of grief when Charles the Second of Spain decided to sort out the English troublemakers by sending an armada. (Putting it in the charge of an admiral on his first sea voyage may not have been a great idea!).

On a lesser scale, smugglers found the channel a great convenience (probably still do). Swimmers frequently tackle the cold waters of the channel. The first successful crossing without buoyancy aids was in 1875, and there have been hundreds since, the fastest being in less than seven hours.

The first crossing by air must have been a big worry, particularly as it was a Frenchman who did it. In 1785, Jean-Pierre Blanchard, with an American companion, flew a hot air balloon from Dover to France (making use of the prevailing wind). They almost didn't make it and were discarding everything they could (they arrived in their underwear!). In the same year two Frenchmen tried to do the same in a composite balloon with a bag of hydrogen and a small fire to keep the air hot in the other part, not a good combination. The result was predictable.

However, it was the first crossing in a heavier than air machine in 1909 that brought home that the channel was not much of a deterrent to would-be invaders. Louis Bleriot flew from France to Dover in a little over half an hour, in a machine of his own design, claiming the thousand pounds prize offered by "The Daily Mail". A court case against English aviation pioneer A.V. Roe for "disturbing the peace" was quietly dropped.

In August 1914, a motley collection of a few dozen aircraft of the newly formed Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service flew the channel to assist troops on the ground, although opinions differed as to what they could be used for. Reconnaissance? General Haig put his faith in the Cavalry.

During WW1, cross-channel raids were carried out by Zeppelin airships (rigid balloons with powerful engines) and later by "heavy" bombers, although the effects were more psychological than material. This led to the formation of the RAF (in 1918) for the defence of England. When peace came, war-surplus aeroplanes were soon being converted to civilian "airliners" and cross-channel flights became popular.

In 1940, only the failure of the Luftwaffe to destroy the RAF prevented Hitler's invasion barges from crossing the channel, and again, on D-day, "air superiority" allowed the landings to go ahead (across the Channel), with minimal interference from above. After the war, cheap cross-Channel travel was provided by ferries and for a period, hovercraft, until the Channel Tunnel made these uncompetitive.

However, the Channel remained a challenge for some and there was still scope for other “pioneering” flights, particularly the first pedal-powered flight across the Channel, accomplished in 1979, and only a couple of years later, a solar-powered aircraft flew the channel as part of a longer, five hour flight. A glider crossed as early as 1931 and more recently, a “wing-suit”, assisted by a carbon-fibre wing, was used for a “free-fall” crossing. Is there anything left for the Channel?

Barry Kemp Facilitator

[The Philosophy of Well-Being](#)

The best way to think of philosophy, is not as a noun but as a present participle; philosophizing!

There is really no such thing as Philosophy; there is only “Philosophizing”.

Philosophizing, in the Hellenic concept, means an active wrestling with one’s conventional opinions and perceptions. It is something we can practise ourselves everywhere and at all times – on the bus, in a restaurant, having breakfast, going to bed. It is something we should try to weave into the fabric of our daily life.

The proliferation of social workers, counselors, therapists, advisors, psychiatrists and life coaches testifies to the desperate need of people for guidance, or at least intelligent advice when tragedy hits them.

But is that all our own society has to offer if tragedy hits you, other than anti-depressants?

Increasingly few people in western society believe in Christianity.

We turn to eastern faiths, like Buddhism or Yoga, but these always feel a little exotic, not to say alien.

“Philosophy does not promise to secure anything external for man; otherwise it would be admitting something that lies beyond its proper subject-matter.

For as the material of the carpenter is wood, and that of the statuary is bronze, so the subject matter of the art of living is each person’s own life”. (Epictetus)

What our own society has to offer is philosophy – not just Stoic philosophy, but Epicurean, Aristotelian, Platonic. If Western culture is a forest, then Greek philosophy is the secret well that has enabled that forest to grow over the last two thousand years. The well has become grown over and lost from sight, but the water in the well is just as clear and life-sustaining as ever.

We need to bring philosophy out of the lecture hall and show its practical benefits to ordinary people.

And it is our heritage, not just as Europeans, but as human beings. The object of inquiry in Greek philosophy is not the Western mind, but the human mind. Greek philosophy gives us a way of understanding the mind, learning of how to become attentive to it, and to free it from emotional suffering and bring it into harmony with reality.

And those lessons are just as applicable for people living outside the Western sphere. Indeed, other great cultures, such as Buddhism or Taoism, came to very similar conclusions and cognitive techniques about a hundred years before Greek philosophy.

It is exciting that the insights of Greek philosophy are gradually returning to the mainstream of our societies, in part through the success of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, which uses the techniques and insights of Stoic, Epicurean and Aristotelian psychotherapies.

To be inquisitive is human nature. We have a need to understand the world around us and our place in it, as well as the way we think and behave.

Our search for knowledge demands explanations – including explanations of how we come to know things and if we can be sure of what we know.

It was from this desire to know about the world, and not just believe what religion or tradition told them, that the first philosophers emerged in Ancient Greece.

However, the world is no less perplexing now as it was then.

There is a growing interest in philosophy as a hobby and philosophy groups are becoming more and more popular, where like-minded people can meet to discuss philosophy in an informal setting.

A good example is the growing enthusiasm displayed by new enrollments in the U3A classes in Coffs Harbour this year.

Gerrit Breunis, Facilitator

[The Ukulele Group](#)

The Ukulele group is going well, and now with more confidence and experience have enjoyed last term. We've had a few lunches at the 'Chill Out' cafe where we've provided some entertainment for diners, and have always had very positive feedback from both them and staff.

Some of us would be happy to entertain if any of U3A members were having a picnic lunch or party around town.

Hilary Gray, Facilitator

Nomination Form

for candidates seeking election as office bearers or ordinary committee members at the

Coffs Harbour U3A Inc. AGM

Friday 28th August 2015 at 2:15 – 4:15 pm.

Cavanbah Hall

Harbour Drive, COFFS HARBOUR.

To all U3A members: Please note that nominations are required to be on this form signed by both nominee and nominators.

Nomination form

All committee positions will be declared vacant on the 28th August 2015 and any financial member is welcome to nominate for any of the positions listed below by completing this nomination form.

Nominations **close Friday 21st August 2015:-**

1. the president
2. the vice-president
3. the treasurer
4. the secretary
5. the membership secretary
6. the course co-ordinator
7. the publicity officer
8. the webmaster & newsletter publisher
9. a committee member (total number of members not to exceed 11)

A committee member may hold up to 2 offices (other than both president & vice-president)

You may nominate for any of the above positions.

Please circle the position(s) of choice and if more than one position is nominated please indicate your order of preference.

Nominee _____ Member No. _____

Signature _____

The Name, Signature and Membership number of your Nominator & Seconder

Nominator _____ Member No. _____

Signature _____

Seconder _____ Member No. _____

Signature _____

**Please return this nomination form to The Secretary U3A Coffs Harbour P.O. Box 1596 Coffs Harbour Inc 2450
Nominations to reach the Secretary by 21st August 2015**