

Dec 2022

# U3A Coffs Harbour

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## President's News

Christmas is here and what a lovely time of year! I grew up in Canada so Christmas was cold and snowy but my favourite part of Christmas is the beautiful Christmas Carols. A highlight of Christmas was when my C.G.I.T group (for those of you who are not familiar with this stellar organisation it is the Canadian Girls in Training - I never did find out what we were training for) went carolling to the homes of the elderly and infirm members of the church. It was magical walking in the chill night air, snow crunching underfoot and the lovely coloured lights on the houses. We loved singing all the beautiful old carols and bringing joy and the occasional tear to the lovely people. This is my special Christmas memory and I am sure you have many of your own.

On behalf of the committee: - Karen, Wendy, Kerrie, Jill, Sue, Lesley, Elaine, I want to thank you all for your participation this year and wish you a lovely holiday time.

Merry Christmas Everyone!



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## WHAT'S NEW

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### PRESIDENT'S NEWS

Christmas memories

### IMPOTANT INFO FOR 2023

### THE ORION NEBULA

Win Howard

### HOW DANCING BENEFIT THE ELDERLEY

Dance Movement Classes  
with Carol Myer

### TIME

Patty Delaney

### BOOK REVIEW

A Woman of Intelligence

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# Important Information for 2023

1 January 2023 Courses available for viewing on Coffs Harbour U3A website

11 January 2023 Membership opens for 2023

11 January 2023 Enrolments open for 2023

6 February 2023 Term 1 begins

All membership fees (new and continuing) are \$60 per member in 2023.



## The Orion Nebula

By Win Howard, Course Leader for Astronomy

The night sky contains vast clouds of dust and gas, many of them lit up by the intense light of nearby stars. One of the best known is in the constellation of Orion, a group of bright stars sometimes referred to as the Saucepan because of its shape. At the moment it is easily seen in the early morning sky. If you can find it you may notice the middle star of the Saucepan's handle looks fuzzy. Here is my image of it. The pink colour is produced by nearby stars causing the gas to fluoresce.



# Foodie Corner

As a person with special dietary needs (gluten and lactose intolerant) Xmas menus can be a bit of a challenge particularly regarding dessert. Oh to be able to eat my husband's Xmas pudding from a recipe handed down through several generations of his family. That lovely, rich aroma of boiling fruit laden with spices enriched in butter! So I decided to make my own alternative – in more ways than one. My recipe produces a cake light as a sponge with exotic flavours of spice and ginger, still with some dried fruit and delicate aromas of Christmas pudding. It is so good it has won prizes at the Coffs Show. Would you like to try it? If so, here is the recipe.

Equipment: 23cm springform pan, greased with oil and the bottom only lined with baking paper.

## Ingredients:

4 eggs, separated  
½ cup lightly packed brown sugar  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
2 large very ripe bananas, mashed  
¼ cup naked ginger, chopped  
¼ cup sultanas  
¼ cup walnuts, chopped  
1 ½ cups almond meal  
Icing sugar

## Method:

- Heat oven to 175 degrees Celsius
- Set the eggs whites aside in a separate bowl
- Mix the egg yolks and sugar with electric beaters until creamy
- Add the baking powder, cinnamon and bananas and mix with electric beaters till well combined
- Wash the beaters and put aside
- Add the ginger, sultanas and walnuts and mix in with a spoon until just combined.
- Add the almond meal and mix in with a spoon until just combined.
- Using the electric beaters, whip the egg whites till stiff.
- Put beaten egg whites into cake mix and fold in with a large metal spoon
- Spoon mixture into prepared pan.
- Place in oven on central rack for about 50 - 60 minutes.
- Cake is cooked when it is quite brown on top and a skewer placed in the centre comes out clean.
- When cool, finish it with a dusting of icing sugar



## Hints:

Folding the stiffened egg whites into the cake mixture is the tricky part – this can take quite a while and must be done slowly and delicately.

Don't be surprised if the cake dips a bit in the centre after it has cooled – this is typical of gluten free cakes.

Happy Xmas baking!

(by Sue Elks)

# How Dancing Benefits the Elderly

**Dancing benefits the elderly** in many ways both physically and mentally. In a recent study, elderly people who dance improve their motor skills and more. This activity is something that can be a part of any elderly person's day when modified to meet the specific person or population.

**Aging is a part of life**, but that does not mean people must experience physical and cognitive decline as a result. There are many ways to fight such a decline, and one of the most delightful is dancing! This type of activity is becoming popular because of the many body areas it impacts positively. In a six-month study following a group of elderly people who took part in a one-hour-a-week dance class, the following positive changes were noted as to how dancing benefits the elderly

- Better posture
- Quicker reaction times
- More agility
- Sharper minds
- Better overall sense of well being

Dancing helped the elderly people in the study improve their motor skills and balance too. There were no deleterious cardio-respiratory effects.

**Today's aging population is facing a great number of risks**, but

people are also more in control of their health through the wide availability of medical information. For example, it is known that an elderly person who sits around the house, engages in few physical or cognitive activities, and neglects his or her diet is going to age much less gracefully than the person that stays active both physically and cognitively and eats right. Dancing is now known to be a way seniors can keep themselves well-tuned on multiple levels. This simple, universal activity is easily accessed and has a social element in that people of all ages and cultures enjoy dancing.

**Dance affects many areas of the body, including the brain.**

The combination of cognitive coordination with the muscles is like a complete workout inside out. A dancing person's brain must cooperate with the muscles to create what is called muscle memory, allowing the person to move fluidly. Regular practice of this hobby can help minimise the risk of cognitive decline as a person ages. In fact, some studies even show that regular dancing can limit the amount of dizziness a person feels, which is another concern regarding the aging population.



This does not mean that an elderly person needs formal ballet training but achieving better balance and reducing dizziness through dancing is preventive of damaging falls.

**Overall, dance gives the brain and body healthy stimulation.** As blood is pumped to the brain by the physical activity, the brain functions better overall. In addition, with such brain stimulation, there is a lower likelihood of cognitive decline. Dancing is fun and invigorating at the same time; it provides elderly people with exercise for the body combined with the cognitive stimulation they need in order to stay "sharp."

As an added way that dancing benefits the elderly, the constant moving that dancing requires can **help to enhance bone health**, the decline of which is another risk of aging. With constant stimulation, the bone cells continually turn over, which means less frailty and fewer broken bones. Elderly people who lead a sedentary life or even those who only utilise the effects of walking or minor exercises will experience more bone loss and frailty than those who participate in something as vigorous and stimulating as dancing.

A study published in the journal *Cerebral Cortex* showed that ballet dancers have a lower likelihood of experiencing dizziness due to suppressed signals in their inner ear.

Should elderly people be hitting the night clubs every night in order to stay young? Luckily, the answer is no! The study followed a group of elderly people who took a **dance class for a mere one hour a week**; that is all it took for them to experience the better posture, quicker reaction times, and sharper minds that dancing confers. That is less activity than is generally recommended for anyone to stay healthy, let alone people of advanced age.

If an elderly loved one has any desire to dance, family members do well to encourage him or her to participate, whether in organised classes or just dancing at home with a loved one or alone. The physical and cognitive activity will help them stay spry mentally, furthering the quality of life in the golden years.



## Dance Movement Class for Seniors

@ Pacific Dance Centre - Coffs Showground with Carol Myer. There's no better time than now to join in and start moving. Come and join us! Every Monday from 10am till 11am for Non Partner Dancing which is called "Dance Fitness Class" and also 11.30am till 12.30pm for Couple Dancing, with morning tea provided in between classes. Dance class specifically designed for seniors.



This class will get the blood flowing and the body dancing. The class includes soft stretches, moving to great tunes and interacting with other participants in a playful setting. No previous dance experience needed & you can come on your own or with a partner.

Check out the Coffs Harbour U3A website for these courses and enrol from 11 January 2023.

# Time

By Patty Delaney  
Student of the Creative Writing course

She stands straight, majestically high. A metre for every year.

Thirty years of time.

Yes, she has a lean on her trunk, but so do I.

She is rooted solidly in the earth and does not budge when I lean on her, tears filling my eyes.

She is my treasure.

Her limbs are long and slender. Grey-green leaves are lemon-scented, and the foliage dispersed to allow the breeze to nudge her to flutter and wave in the southerly breeze that tosses hints of the new season.

Her pale grey branches reach and spread outwards, making a silhouette on the Wedgewood blue sky. She begins to peel her winter clothing of bark, revealing a bit here, a bit there, in a seductive manner, her underlying springtime pinkish-grey skin.

I sit on the verandah with my cup of tea, warming my hands, and my gaze lifts to her.

Four crested pigeons doze in her branches. The bird bath beneath her is a cacophony of raucous rainbow lorikeets. They splash, dip, and hop in and out of the water, nipping each other into the pecking order. They shake their feathers, and the light dazzles on the water droplets.

Soon her buds will form, and the blue-eyed honey eaters will feast with the lorikeets. She will ooze her sweet, honeyed nectar from the lemon-coloured flowers. The lorikeets will flash their feather boas like drunken women at a burlesque show.

The thick toffee smell will infuse the surrounding garden and make humans sniff the air to get high.

Her effect on me is like a drug with mind-altering abilities. Her aroma alters the cells throughout my human body resulting in euphoria. Everything is brighter and a pace slower yet elevating.

I am at fault. I planted her as a baby too close to the boundary with no fences between neighbours.

Now they want the in-ground swimming pool installed. Finally, the neighbours tell me that my tree will have to go.

I cringe, and then my anger flares up in me like hot lava. I am too emotionally upset. So I walk away from the discussions in the back garden.

I hide in the house, in denial.

Why should my tree be sacrificed for the cemented artificial chlorine-smelling arrival of new money?

Her leaves and bark will drift into the pool, and her roots will obstruct their digging. As a result, she impedes access for the fiberglass shell.

She has to go. She has to go.

The Council tells me.

Even if we leave her, she will be undermined, and her roots ruptured. She will go into a slow decline and die slowly.

Why are the natural living things in the environment not valued.?

She exhales oxygen, and we breathe it in. My tree sequesters carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. She provides a causeway for the brushtail possum who comes to eat nocturnal morsels of apple and pear. Her foliage obscures the owl that hums like a low-stringed instrument every night. Her falling leaves become nutrients for the soil.

Sunset silhouettes her reach against the red and orange of the end of the day.

When the time comes, I cannot be there when they chop at her limbs, when they rip her from the earth.

My cries will eclipse hers. My Lemon Scented Gum



# Book Review

## A Woman of Intelligence by Karin Tanabe

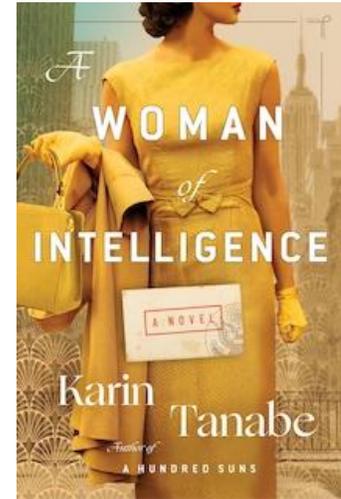
Shortly after the end of World War II, Cold War paranoia spread like a virus. Americans were warned that communism was infecting the country, and if it wasn't stamped out, democracy would implode. As Karin Tanabe writes in her bold historical novel "A Woman of Intelligence," by 1954, the word "Red" was everywhere: "Russian Reds, Red China this and that, control of Red unions, warnings about Red teachers. The Subversive Activities Control Board was formed by our government to find and stomp out the Red threat in America, from schoolrooms to boardrooms."

While the government was trying to weed out communists, real and imagined, American women were rethinking their role in society. Staying home and raising a family was considered a sacred duty, but a growing number of women wanted careers outside the home. Like Peggy Olson in "Mad Men," they were rejecting the June Cleaver stereotype and opting for a pay check.

One such woman is Katharina "Rina" West Edgeworth, the bright and sophisticated young mother and wife at the centre of "A Woman of Intelligence." Fluent in four languages, Rina spent six years working as an interpreter at the United Nations before she quit to stay home with her children. That's what her husband, Tom, wanted and, not surprisingly, so did the men with whom she worked. One male colleague told her that the sight of her pregnant belly in the halls of the U.N. was making people feel uncomfortable.

Rina's husband is chief of paediatric surgery at Lenox Hill, they live in a luxury apartment building, and Rina wears designer clothes. The only thing missing in her life is joy. And like the proverbial bird in a gilded cage, she stares out the windows of her Fifth Avenue apartment wondering how she lost it. "I'd forgotten that freedom was the most glamorous thing anyone could possess." She loves her children, but her mind "no longer fizzed with intellectual rigor; it bubbled with boredom in French, Italian, German, and English."

Life has bigger plans for Rina. She is approached by an FBI agent who asks her to insinuate herself into the life of a member of the Communist Party who is passing U.S. documents to the Russians. Her mission as an informer: to gain his trust by making him believe she is couriering government documents for a Communist front group and report back to the FBI on his activities.



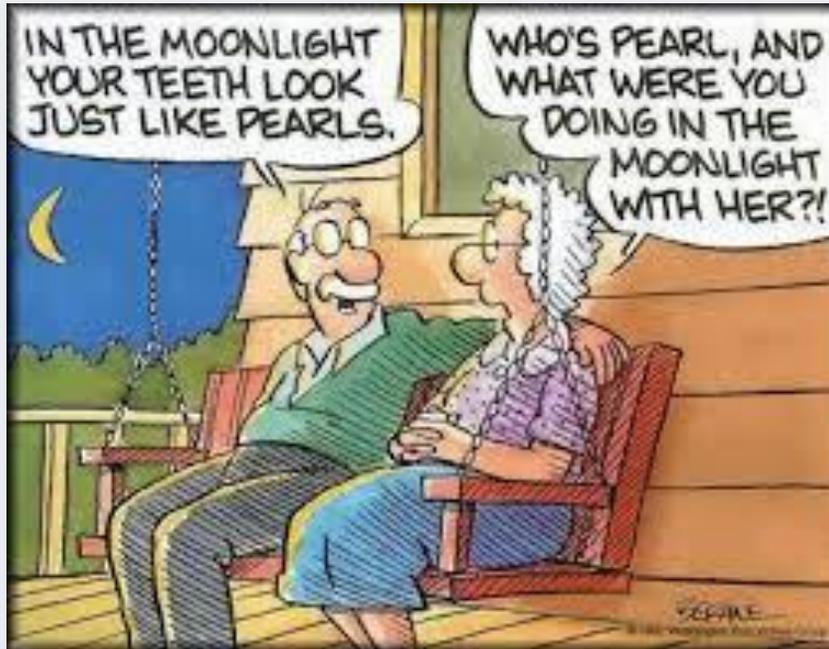
So she readily agrees and discovers that she "hadn't felt this alive in months."

The external thrills in this quasi-spy novel ratchet up when undercover agents are exposed, killings occur, documents are passed and Rina tries to hide her secret life from her husband. The internal thrills belong to Rina, who begins to like herself again.

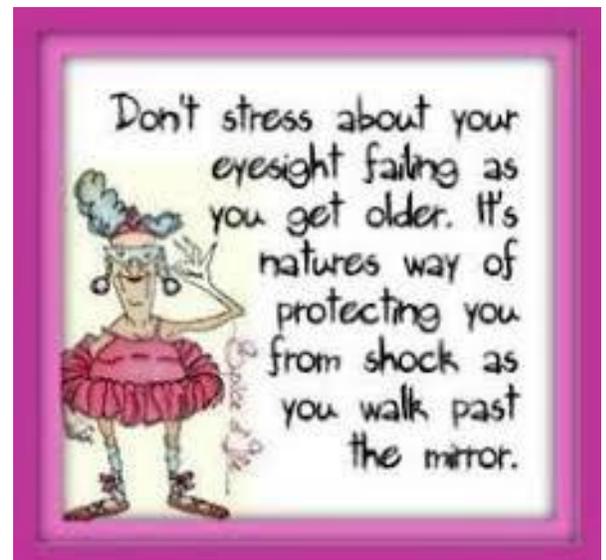
There is so much punchy dialogue and funny-sad humour in this novel. When Tom can't relate to the challenges of childbirth or caring for children full-time, his mother sets him straight: "You men refuse to acknowledge it all. Giving birth? It's not exactly one long nude cocktail party with quite the favour at the end." When a psychiatrist tells Rina she has too much time on her hands and recommends macrame or quilting, she says: "I have a master's degree from Columbia, and it is not in quilting." In that case, he responds, "I'll leave you a bottle of Thorazine."

This is a mid-20th-century period piece, but oh, how familiar it all seems: Women are judged for not having children, for delaying motherhood or for having children and not staying home. Most radically of all, Tanabe writes spot-on about something many men and women are still loath to talk about: that women can love their children but still crave and need a life outside the home.

# Just for a laugh 😊



"I'll only give you the paper if you promise not to let the news upset you."



## Next Edition

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all U3A members and course leaders who contributed to the Coffs Harbour U3A newsletter in 2022. Here's hoping that in 2023 we can continue this wonderful forum for sharing ideas and information within our membership.

Send your newsletter articles and images to The Editor, via [info@coffs.u3anet.org.au](mailto:info@coffs.u3anet.org.au)