

July 2022

# U3A Coffs Harbour

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## President's News

### Thirty Years of Friendship, Fun and Learning!

On September 23, 1992, a group of people met to discuss setting up a U3A group in Coffs Harbour. Thirty years later we wish to commemorate the achievement of this ambitious committee and all the friendships, fun and learning that U3A has sparked over the years.

You are all invited to a celebration at the Norm Jordan Pavilion, Coffs Harbour Showground on Friday September 23 from 11 a.m. to 2p.m. There will be music, displays, reminiscences of some of those original members, a guest speaker, and lunch.

Planning is still underway so there will be more information coming to you later but please make note of this date so you can join us. Keep your eyes peeled for the invitation!

### Annual General Meeting

The U3A Coffs Harbour AGM will be held on Friday 26 August 2022 at 1pm – venue yet to be decided. All members will be notified closer to the date.

Regards from Karen Boyd.

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## WHAT'S NEW

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### PRESIDENT'S NEWS

30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Celebration

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AGM 26 August 2022

### UNDERSTANDING POETRY

David Boyd

### UNDERSTANDING DIMENTIA

Free Workshop

### A POEM

The Writers Riot  
by David Dodd

### BOOK NOOK

Willow the Wonderer by  
Reeta Dhar

### MISSION TO MARS

Barbara Caines

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# Understanding Poetry

By David Boyd, Course Coordinator for Understanding Poetry, Wednesdays 1-2.30pm

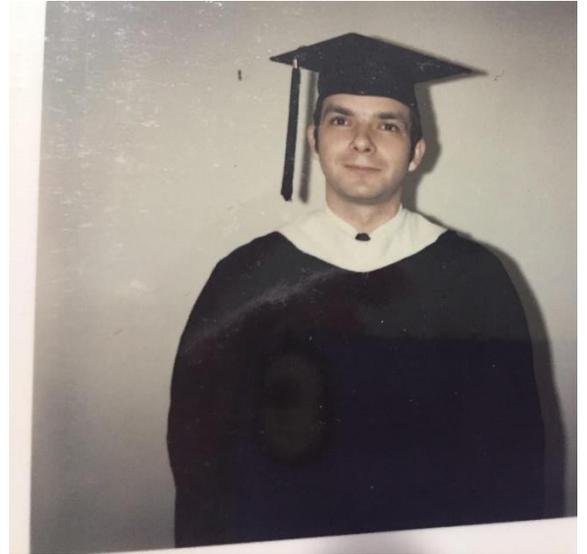
When I arrived in Australia fifty years ago to take up a lectureship in a university English department, I assumed that I was going to spend a lot of time talking to students about poetry. After all, that was the subject of the doctoral dissertation I'd just completed, all 200 pages of it: minor English poets of the later eighteenth century.

Curiously, though, there didn't seem to be many students interested in that subject, so I spent the next twenty years lecturing on Shakespeare and his contemporaries, and the twenty years after that setting up a programme in film studies (during which I learned more about minor Hollywood directors of the later twentieth century than I'd ever known about minor English poets of . . . well, you know.

Still, there were all those volumes of poetry I'd acquired over the years, many of which looked suspiciously unread. So, when I moved to Coffs and discovered U3A, and that it was always looking for new tutors, I seized the opportunity.

Minor English poets of the Eighteenth Century seemed a bit too specialized, though, so I broadened the scope to ramble on about English (and Australian and American and maybe Canadian one of these days) poetry from the sixteenth century till last week.

Like most university teachers, I never received any training in teaching. So I had to develop an appropriate pedagogical approach. So I arrive with a handful of photocopies of poems I've found interesting over the preceding fortnight, hand them around, read them aloud, and then we talk about them for an hour and a half. That's it. With luck, most of us understand the poems of the day a bit better but the end of the class. Well, anyway, I do.



David in academic regalia



David recently

# Foodie Corner

I recently managed the Green Room at the Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival (BRWF). A Green Room is a room in a theatre or studio in which performers can relax when they are not performing. The name comes from the suggestion that as a person who feels nauseous is often said to look "green", the 'green room' is the place where the nervous actors wait. In the case of the BRWF, this was the place where authors came to relax before and after their appearances at the Festival.

A full catering menu was on offer in the Green Room for the duration of the Festival, all homemade, and was highly regarded by the authors. So, I can give you the inside gossip on some famous personages food preferences! Norman Swan loved the gado gado with peanut sauce, Jane Caro said the ham, cheese and tomato toastie was a life saver, Mark Tedeschi waxed lyrical on how the chicken soup was just like his mother's and Costa loved everything on the menu.

Of course, I could not go past getting a few selfies with some of my 'pin up' people! (by Sue Elks)



# Watercolour Workshop Success

U3A were very pleased to present this one-day workshop in April by Pat Winnett, a very experienced Watercolour teacher and a member of the Victorian Watercolour Society. In the morning students drew a landscape subject and had a demonstration of ways to tackle the various elements in their drawing. Some small practical exercises were given before students got the first big washes on their paintings. In the afternoon students finished painting the beautiful scenes they had planned. Pat hopes to repeat the workshop on another of her trips from Victoria to see her family in Coffs.



# Understanding Dementia – free workshop

Did you know that nearly ½ million Australians are currently living with dementia? With the ageing of our population this number will double in the next 30 years.

In response to the need for accessible evidence-based education, the Wicking Dementia Centre at the University of Tasmania offers a FREE online course: the **Understanding Dementia MOOC**. Increase your knowledge of dementia and how to enhance the quality of life of people living with this condition.

## Course details

- It's **FREE** and you can enrol today
- Course opens on Tuesday 5th July 2022
- Duration is 7 weeks, with an estimated effort of 3 hours per week
- You can study day or night, on your smartphone, tablet or computer
- Receive a personalised certificate on completion

Many people with dementia live in the community and education about this condition can better support them, as well as their families and caregivers. Our course content includes how the brain is affected by the diseases that cause dementia, symptoms, diagnosis, stages and management, and personal and carers' perspectives of living with dementia.

*The Understanding Dementia MOOC has consistently ranked in the Top 3 courses in the Health and Medicine Category on Class Central (a leading aggregate site of over 80,000 online courses).*

Enrolments are now open at [mooc.utas.edu.au](https://mooc.utas.edu.au)



# A Poem – Writing Group Riot

by David Dodd

The requirement was: 26 sentences using letters of the alphabet to start each sentence



**A** placid group of writers, the description mostly fits,  
'til Barbara made an edict which blew that claim to bits.  
**B**revity was what she sought, eight hundred words is crap,  
it makes the listeners wander off, it makes them take a nap.  
**C**ould you all stay focused, you literary nerds,  
and edit, edit, edit down, less than one hundred words.  
**D**avid threw a tantrum, said it simply can't be done,  
"Yes you will," cried Barbara, "you're having too much fun."  
**E**very week I listen, to a conga line of pap,  
it makes me want to cry and gag, and vomit in my lap.  
**F**rom now on folks I'm counting words, you'll really have to trim  
it,  
cause fingers go into my ears when you have reached the  
limit."  
**G**ood gracious me," smiled sweet Jean, "an auditory blocker?  
Putting fingers in your ears? Barb you're off your rocker."  
**H**ow can I explain," roared Greg, his voice alarming birds,  
"the workings of a four-stroke, in a hundred bloody words?"  
**I**'ve thought about this long and hard, I'll stem the verbiage  
flow,  
I may seem like a tyrant, but my answer's simply NO."  
**J**ennifer was vocal, "Your motive's very shady,  
you're stifling creative flow from U3A's dark lady."  
**K**eep quiet now you motley lot," the facilitator roared,  
"if you persist with mutiny, I'll report you to the board."  
**L**eslie led the charge and John Murtas leapt in glee,  
and scooped up all the biscuits that were meant for morning  
tea.  
**M**y God!" shrieked Barb "what's happening?" as biscuits sliced  
the air  
forcing Barb to shelter low, beneath her vinyl chair.  
**N**ot one to flee when cornered, feisty Barb crawled out to fight,  
with ninja kicks to her left and headbutts to the right.  
**O**h my God , what has she done," Chris worried out aloud,  
"whatever can she do to pacify this crowd?"  
**P**hil and Patty bore the brunt of Barb's full-on attack,  
and beaten, bruised and swollen they retreated down the back.  
**Q**uestioning the wisdom of continuing the brawl,  
Kerry did a runner, seeking refuge in the hall.  
**R**ayna egged on Robyn, she clearly wanted more,  
while David scoured the carpet, seeking biscuits on the floor.  
**S**ome tables were upended, 'fore the fracas reached  
cessation,  
the mob began to settle, through John Rosley's mediation.  
**T**ry that again you low-life, and you will reap my ire  
I'm Super-Barb the dynamo ..... trust me I am no liar.  
**U**surpers I won't tolerate, don't white-ant my decision,

but I'll think about your word limit, I'll give it some revision."

Very quickly furniture was restored to rightful place,  
hair and clothes were straightened, Phil attended to his face.

While others gathered missing teeth, and clumps of silver hair,  
Barb reapplied her lipstick..... then sat smirking on her chair.

X-rays were sought for writers who'd succumbed to Barbara's  
blows

and writers who'd been nurses treated cuts and bloodied nose.

"You've made your point," Barb relented, to enthusiastic  
cheers,

"but two hundred words is all I'll hear, then fingers block my  
ears."

Zen thoughts rained down on writers who recently had bled,  
And clever lines rolled off their pens while pigs flew overhead.

# Book Nook – Willow the Wonderer

by Reeta Dhar

The Author: Reeta Dhar grew up surrounded by stories; tales from the olden days her grannies used to tell, scary stories that her siblings would share, legends about ancient yogis her dad read aloud, Bollywood films her mum rented and stories from all the glorious books she read. Stories became her doorway into a world of imagination that enthralled, enticed and enchanted in equal measure. They inspired her to travel, climb mountains, do yoga, meditate and seek out the magic in life.

Reeta has had an accomplished career in the world of business, but writing was always something she was going to do. With the onset of COVID in 2020 she decided to switch gears and chase her dream in the world of children's book publishing. She has since written and published her first children's book, *Willow the Wonderer*. In this first book, she brings together her love of rhyme and the natural world with life's little lessons she has learnt along the way.

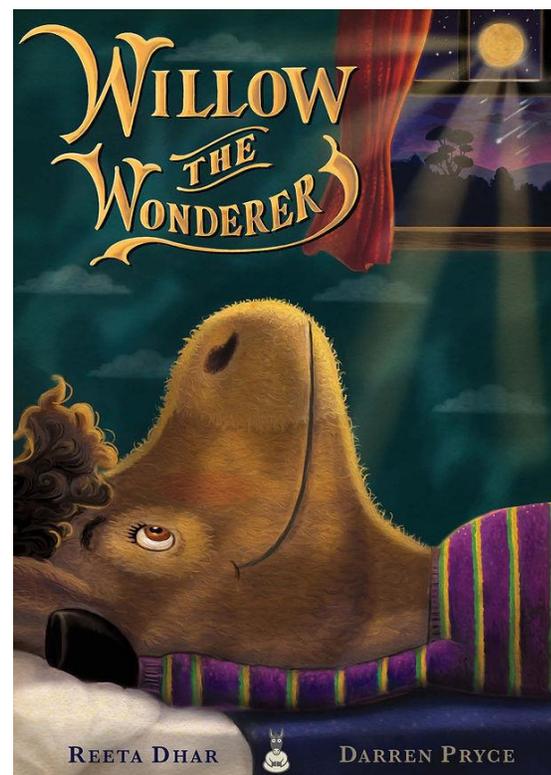
The book: Willow the Wonderer is an epic storybook for kids. It follows the adventures of Willow, an adorable wise ass, on a quest to find happiness.

Written in perfect rhyme, the melodious stanzas take us on an enchanting a journey through the natural world, exploring many wondrous places and discovering many marvellous creatures. The beautifully crafted imagery draws young readers in, as they seek out and count the many creatures that Willow meets that day.

Whilst helping develop essential literacy and numeracy skills, the essence of the story remains grounded in age-old universal wisdom about the nature and source of happiness.

Available in ebook, hardcover, paperback and large format directly from Wise As Stories website -

<https://www.wiseasstories.com/willow-the-wonderer>



# Mission to Mars

By Barbara Caines, Course Coordinator for Creative Writing, Wednesdays  
9.30-11.30am

Ted came in from the garage after putting his car away. He'd been playing golf since 6am and was a mite touchy, having played poorly. When he saw Carol with a letter and a dreamy look in her eyes, he had a flashback to the times when she had received two letters by mistake and had left him to go off to that philosophy conference as a guest speaker and to the Olympic games as a gymnast. "What's in the letter Carol?" he asked, fearful of the answer.

"Oh, it's probably a mistake but it seems I'm being invited to fly to Cape Canaveral to participate in intensive training to become a crew member on the first mission to Mars in 2024. Fancy that. Of course, it's impossible but wouldn't it be nice."

"Wouldn't it be nice if you could make some lunch. I'm beat, I played like an old woman."

"Yes dear," replied Carol as she absentmindedly plonked a loaf of bread on the table with the butter, ham and a jar of hand cream that was on the counter. "You help yourself; I'm just popping down to the library to pick up a few books."

Ted read the letter while Carol was away and yes, it was her name and address. The letter was from someone named Melon Usk and it stated he had been given her name by the Australian Interplanetary Space Agency as a shining example of Australian womanhood, in the prime of her life. And as she had indicated she was interested in being on the first expedition to Mars, could she report to SpaceX headquarters in Houston on the 14 h of September.

The letter also stated that a payment for \$200,000 would be expected from her before the training could begin.

When Carol returned from the library, she said she had used the library's computer to find out more about space travel to Mars.

"Forget it Carol, this Usk bloke wants \$200,000 from you to pay for your training. It's a con." Anyway, we can't afford it." Carol turned a threatening shade of red and hissed. "Like we couldn't afford your \$400,000 fishing boat. I won't spend \$200,000 dollars if you sell your boat." "That's not fair," said Ted, I love that boat." "Well then, it's settled," said Carol, "I'm off to the US."

"But you can't come back from Mars. It's a one-way trip. Everyone knows that." Said Ted. "Yes, and I know that. I'm not actually going to be on the spacecraft when it leaves Earth. I'll



pull out after I've made a reasonable attempt at the training course. When they see how old I am, they'll be relieved to get rid of me. So, I'll be back before Christmas, you'll see."

When Ted went off for his afternoon nap, Carol went over what she had learnt at the library about the mission to Mars. *'The requirements were resilience, adaptability, curiosity, an ability to trust, be over 18, have a medical certificate and most importantly, be capable of self-reflection.'*

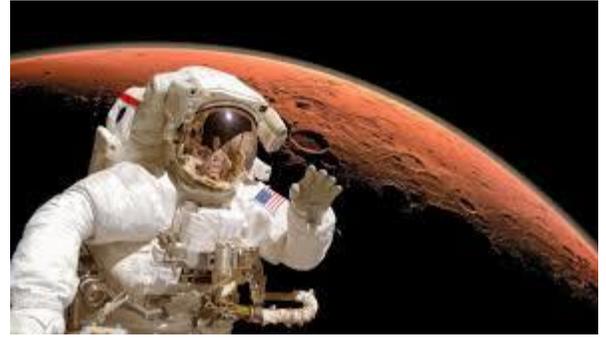
She read on: *"Once on Mars, there will be no means to return to Earth. Mars will be home. To join SpaceX's first mission to Mars you must be prepared to spend your life there. The first journey to Mars is going to be extremely dangerous. The first human beings to set foot on the planet will have to deal with an onslaught of radiation, solar flares, weak gravity, frigid cold, and even unknown difficulties. But it's worth the risk to become a multi-planetary species.'*

Carol wasn't bothered by this drastic information. She will be safely home by then and will have gotten her \$200,000 worth and probably be famous, given her age and high level of fitness. She dashed off a letter informing Melon Usk she will be delighted to go to Mars.

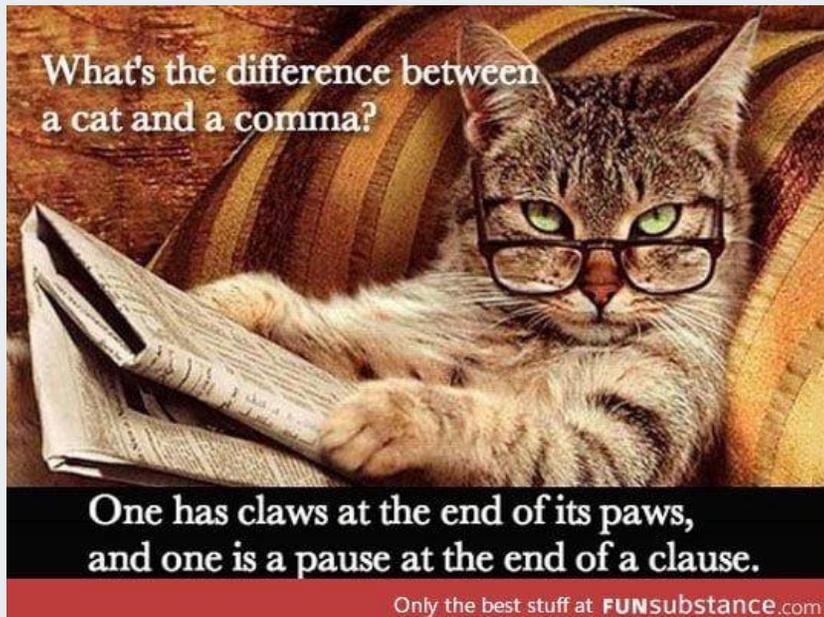
When she eventually arrived and reported to the Space X agency she was greeted with much laughter and sarcasm. Melon Usk, who was known for his foul temper, demanded to see the person who had contacted Carol, but no one came forward. After all, he was the one who had written to her and here she was, ready to commence training. Usk could hardly send her marching. It would be a case of ageism and he couldn't risk the bad publicity. He didn't think to put an upper limit on the age requirement. Why would an old girl like that want to die anyway, he thought? But maybe that was the answer. If he couldn't get young people to give up their entire lives, why not fill the space craft with fit and healthy oldies. If they were happy to go, knowing that they couldn't come back, there would be no regrets and no public outcry. Besides no hormone problems leading to liaisons in the spacecraft broom cupboard producing little Martians that would demand childcare and visits from the Wiggles.

"Come into my office Carol dear. Can I get you a cup of tea. Sign here." Carol signed.

"You did read the fine print about being forbidden to pull out before take-off? Did you bring the money?"



## Just for a laugh 😊



## Next Edition

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all U3A members and cours leaders to write an article of any length on an experience within or outside our U3A which you think will be of interest to our members. We are aiming at one newsletter per term so please help out with your submissions.

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



*I decided  
to take  
an  
aerobics class.  
I bent,  
twisted,  
gyrated*

*and jumped up and down  
for an hour.*

*But, by the time  
I got my leotard on,  
the class was over.*