



The U3A Crier

NEWSLETTER OF NATURALISTE
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE INC
Spring Edition 2016

EDITORIAL

Again the Spring Edition coincides with Adult Learners' Week, 1st- 8th September, 2016. The slogan for this week, from the ALW organisation is '**Spread your Wings – Learn outside the square**'. A glance at the courses on offer this semester and the Topical Talks to be presented shows that at least 216 people (members of Naturaliste U3A) are doing just that! Throughout the year we try to include a contribution from each of our groups. Five are featured in this newsletter and a similar number to come in December. Leaders' contributions are an important part of *The Crier*.

It seems that Wally must have set something off with his course this year as many of you will have noticed the large number of references to 'Neuroscience' that have appeared in all types of media in the past few months – synchronicity at work. Dennis too, may have encountered much discussion about whether our wet and cold winter (many of us referring to it as being an old-fashioned one similar to what we remember from years ago) is connected to climate change! Chris and Joan

FROM THE CHAIR

It has been interesting reading the Potted History of Naturaliste U3A, as provided by Richard Liston. By chance, a few weeks ago I was introduced to Patti McSwain and had quite a chat about the changes and growth that have happened since those early years when she was President. Sincere thanks must go to Richard for the great service he has given us as Treasurer since the re-formation of the group in 2010.

One of the things that I would like to draw attention to in this newsletter is the way that Group Leaders are prepared to make various accommodations to adapt to participants' needs in the groups. Examples include in Dru Yoga, Valerie reminds us to work only within our limits, she checks that I am comfortable doing some of the floor-work sitting on a chair. Jacqui, in Circle Dancing, has modified many of the steps to avoid causing potential pain in knees and hips. In the Walking Group we can walk at a pace that we prefer. In each case this is done without anyone feeling embarrassed. Wally has modified this semester's Neuroscience course to accommodate those without computers. The list could, and does, go on. Some leaders have indicated that they will be making a few changes in response to feedback forms completed by participants. Thank you to you all.

Early in November it will be Seniors Week. I contacted COTA who have provided speakers in the past, to see if I could get their presenters on Cyber Safety to give us a talk during that week. As it happens, the Senior Citizens Centre has beaten me to it. For anyone interested in attending that presentation, please check information in the Snippets below. I will follow up next year. Joan Parke (President)

INFORMATION FROM THE ARCHIVES

A Potted History of U3A in the Busselton-Dunsborough region.

The first Busselton U3A started under the Presidency of Patti McSwain and continued until 2003 when it lapsed through lack of support.

In mid-2009 another start-up, the precursor to the current Naturaliste U3A, was initiated and a main driver in the beginning was Peter Nash who had extensive experience with a U3A interstate in Mannheim, Victoria. Peter inspired a small group including Ken Jack, Patti McSwain, Ian and Chris Benporath, Tom and Sue Walmsley, John Watt, Ted Witham, Christina Marruffo and Richard Liston. In October 2009 a public meeting was held at St Mary's Hall and a range of courses and a nucleus of leaders were identified.

At the point where a steering committee was established Peter withdrew from the group. Tom Walmsley acted as chair, Ken his deputy, Sue as secretary and Richard was treasurer. Ken did sterling work to develop a set of Rules (new term for Constitution), and Incorporation for the group was sought. Tom focussed on finding and encouraging potential leaders to offer classes.

Incorporation of NatU3A was granted on 9th April 2010. During Semester Two we held our first AGM, adopted the Rules and were delighted to have Tom Walmsley as our inaugural Chairman, Ken Jack Vice-Chairman, Sue Walmsley Secretary and Richard Liston Treasurer.

There was quite a bit of discussion about the desirability and affordability of having our own premises. It was decided that, at that point, it was not a viable option. Ken drew our attention to the Busselton Family Centre as a possible venue and we now have a very strong partnership with that organisation and particularly its CEO, Rilla Beresford.

Another topic of discussion which started then was the need for our own website. It took three years for that to come to fruition thanks to the tireless efforts of Creena Holly.

In First Semester 2010, eight courses were offered to around 115 enrolments from 85 members. At the 30th June 2010 the group had 99 financial members. Our first financial member was Chris Benporath with Receipt #3 (the first two receipts were for donations received). Chris is still an active member today.

In Semester Two 10 classes attracted 107 enrolments, and at the end of that year we had 140 financial members.

As you read this article we are in the middle of Semester Two, 2016, with 216 financial members and 21 classes being taken up by 248 enrolees.

Richard Liston Treasurer August 2016

AROUND THE GROUPS

GEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES Leader Dennis Gee

A grand total of 28 enthusiastic people enrolled for this six-lecture course in Semester One, under the banner of ***Geological Perspectives on Some Current Issues***. The overriding theme was the physical, chemical and geological processes that shaped Earth's environment from its birth 4.5 billion years ago to the present day.

Earth began its geological record with hot acidic surface waters, toxic atmosphere, volcanoes everywhere, and evolved into the glorious planet we know today, mainly by simple inorganic chemical reactions and complimentary biochemical actions of endemic primitive micro-organisms which eventually oxygenated the atmosphere.

During its history, our robust planet Earth suffered (or perhaps enjoyed) severe bombardments from space bolides, five traumatic faunal extinctions, four global glaciations, and numerous catastrophic climate cycles, all possibly related to out-gassing and the complementary natural sequestration of atmospheric carbon dioxide. A summary was given of the growing evidence that such dramatic swings in past climates are ultimately related to plate tectonic activity.

Examples of climate change and landscape evolution were drawn from the time Australia broke free from Gondwana and journeyed north, where it now collides with the Indonesian Arc. These are expressed by the history of aridity, ancient inland waterways, and sinking and rising shore-lines.

The final lecture addressed the science and language of climate change, examining what is settled and what is not. Observational data was relied upon that shows Earth's temperature has risen (only) 0.75°C in a century, and sea level has risen (only) 17cm in the last 100 years - and more than half of this is due to thermal expansion of the ocean. IPCC predictions do not match reality.

Physiographic expressions of changing sea levels associated with the last ice age are found in the landscapes around Busselton – on shore and offshore. Salutary is the remarkable periodic oscillation of glacial and interglacial events over the last five million years. These are perturbations on an otherwise long-term cooling Earth. Will it continue to pulse on 100,000 year cycles?

As light relief from the laws and physics and chemistry, excursions were made into gold and iron ore – two commodities that continue to underpin the economy of Western Australia. Interestingly the different iron-ore types found in WA are a product of the progressive biogenic oxygenation of the early atmosphere billions of years ago. I maintain that as our hydrothermal gold deposits are deep vertical plumbing systems from the mantle, gold will not run out, and there is still more to find.

A folder of “thumbnails” of all PPT lecture slides was provided. Feedback from the



participants was most rewarding, but with the suggestions that the course should be longer, broader, deeper, slower, and with bigger images in the handout. Yes - our minds are agile, but our eyesight needs a little help.

I am inclined to offer something similar next year.

NEUROSCIENCE: MAPPING the MIND Leader Wally Mueller

The class of 16 who tackled the new course on neuroscience are to be congratulated on jumping in at the deep end and remaining afloat at the end of 10 weeks, delving into the workings of the human brain. During the course, we were fortunate in having the recommended text, David Eagleman's "The Brain: The Story of You" (based on a BBC program), appear as a 5-week series on ABC TV. This revealing program helped enormously to demystify neuroscience and proved to be a catalyst for searching questions raised in class. Whenever I could not provide a satisfactory answer, in most cases we were lucky to have class members with relevant expertise (from the fields of nursing, teaching, psychology, philosophy and so on) who could elaborate with fuller responses. It was a great pleasure to be part of a lively, engaged group willing to share their expertise and experience in our attempts to gain insights from neuroscience research findings.

The course was organized into 10 broad topics: the lure of neuroscience, building a brain, hemispheric specialization, signatures of consciousness, altered states of consciousness (meditation), existence of free will, memory, emotions rationality and moral behaviour, disorders of the brain, and finally the future of the brain. There were many topics we could not fit in, but feedback from the group was gratifying and will be used to fine-tune the program when it is repeated in the second semester for 19 new class members. A follow-up course is possible (perhaps 2018), extending the range of topics including the latest findings and discussing more contentious issues. Wally Mueller

WALKING GROUP Leader Jacqui Rawling



Numbers of the Walking Group have varied but a small core of us have faced some blustery mornings as we head off from the jetty to King St. Keen ones go on a little further to the drain, a few of us (looking after sore knees or hips) wait for them and we return together. There is no pressure for us to go faster than we can comfortably manage and we tend to pair off a bit with those of similar pace. Our walk is followed up by having a cuppa at The Goose restaurant. There, at times we could be a Book Club with our discussion about books we've read! Opinions are passed on the state of the beach, what is happening with the weather, the wonders of the bay in varying conditions. Plenty of laughs, connecting with like-minded others, building friendships – who would have thought that a walking group could be so diverse!

Oh, on a couple of occasions when the weather was just too bad to walk, we didn't give up, just modified to a 50 metre 'brisk walk' from our cars to The Goose! Thanks Jacqui for facilitating this group. Joan Parke

LATIN Leader Ted Witham

Universitas III^e Aetatis Physici Linguae Latinae scholastici



Ab sinistro ad dexteram : Lynda (*Lynda*) Chilvers, Barbara (*Barbara*) Taylor, Jill (*Giuliana*) Cross, Christine (*Christina*) McDonald, Valerie (*Valeria*) Frearson-Lane, Graham (*Graime*) Stainton

Dux: Ted (*Eduarde*) Witham

The Latin group set themselves the challenge of translating the crusty old Christian priest Tertullian's denunciation of *The Shows* (he was the one who thought it a bad idea to kill people and animals in the Coliseum for entertainment). Tertullian certainly had the brain cells working overtime, but we decided he was too difficult for us, so we returned to learning conversational Latin.

As we are a very conversational group, this was a good move, and the group is actually growing. We will have 8 members in Semester 2 (with room for two more). Latin has turned out to be much fun and extremely engaging.

Viva lingua Latina!

MUSIC APPRECIATION Leader David McDonald

David has cleverly combined a task from the 'Creative Writing' Group (Leader Moira Dahlberg) and his contribution to The Crier! He asks that readers please excuse tense changes as the piece was written before session 1 of music appreciation had occurred.

David McDonald Homework 20/6/16

Constraints: Write a non-fiction piece about an historical character or event.

Introduction

In Second Semester each Session of *Music Appreciation* will commence with the overture from one of Richard Wagner's Operas and the first Session will begin with the overture from his opera *Rienzi*. Each Session will also include examples from the works of an Australian Female Composer and in the first session we will listen to some compositions by Becky Llewellyn.

Wagner for Hitler and Lenin for Llewellyn!

"Birth and fortune are evidently the two circumstances which principally set one man above another." Adam Smith ¹

Both Vladimir Lenin (1870 - 1924) and Adolf Hitler (1889 - 1945) commenced their political careers with the aim of overcoming the privilege of inherited wealth and in both cases the results were catastrophic. Hitler was inspired by the music of Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and Lenin has inspired a musical composition by Becky Llewellyn (1950 -).

Richard Wagner's writings display his right wing nationalism and anti-Semitism and the plots of most of his operas are based on stories from German mythology. However his opera *Rienzi*, written in 1842, is set in Rome. It tells the story of Cola di Rienzi (1313 – 1354) a populist Italian who led a peasant revolt against the aristocracy. At first Rienzi had the support of the Church but eventually it turned against him and his movement failed.

The opera was a personal favourite of Hitler's. He first saw it as a young man in 1906. Apparently Hitler told friends that the opera moved him to consolidate his political views that eventually led to the formation of the National Socialist Party. He insisted that the overture be used to open the Party Rallies. For his fiftieth birthday in 1939 Hitler was presented with the original manuscript of the opera. Apparently it was with him in the bunker in Berlin. Unfortunately it was destroyed, lost or stolen when the bunker was gutted during the closing days of the Second World War.

The fact that the writings and music of Wagner became part of German National Socialist philosophy should not cloud our enjoyment of listening to the wonderful music he composed.

A balance is provided if we move to the far left of the political spectrum, to music inspired by Lenin. Becky Llewellyn's composition, "*Vladimir Ilyich on the ladder of history*", comprises variations on a theme based on a 15th century Lithuanian carol. Musically the piece traces the career of Lenin, leader of the Russian Communist Revolution and eventually head of the government of the U.S.S.R. until he died in 1924.

Llewellyn was in Lithuania after the collapse of the Soviet Union and watched as a huge statue of Lenin was pulled down. She was, "struck by how something which seemed as permanent as a Communist state and its founder could be so easily trashed by the next 'in group'." ²

"Left" or "Right", "In" or "Out"?

In second semester we will also study the *Gallipoli Symphony*, created to commemorate the tragic events of the Gallipoli campaign. Perhaps it is fitting that the first session will close with "Gelibolu" written by Turkish composer, Omar Faruk Tekilek (1951-). The piece features traditional Turkish instruments, didgeridoo and orchestra. It is described as a, "lament for the past as the singer contemplates the ravages of war...of the shared blood... of the tragic events of one hundred years ago." ³

It seems we learn nothing.

(References are available on request)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and OPEN DAY

FRIDAY 14th OCTOBER 12.30-4.00pm

Following the success of having a showcase of what things Naturaliste U3A has on offer it has been decided to extend the time for an extra hour this year. A number of people commented that they would have liked to have more time to get to see all the displays the course leaders had provided. Yes, and even though the 'Open Day' was only an hour long, and this year will be 2 hours, we will stick with 'Open Day'!

The AGM will start at 2.30. This is an important meeting and informs members of such things as our financial status and the operations/events of the organisation via reports from the Treasurer and President. Importantly, too, it is the time for election/re-election of your Committee. As always a quorum (54 members being 25% of our financial membership this year) is essential so members are encouraged to come and **enjoy** both the Open Day and the AGM.

This year, like all not-for-profit organisations we are having to implement some changes as per the Department of Commerce's New Act. Hopefully these will be minimal but information about those we will have worked on by the time of the AGM will be passed on to you.

CALL for NEW COURSE LEADERS

Yes, 2017 is rapidly approaching and already thoughts are turning towards the courses that will be on offer. Many of this year's will be on offer again but as always it is important to bring in some new ones each semester. So, if you think you would like to 'have a go' at presenting a course, or even if you have some ideas for courses you would like to see on offer, please call David McDonald, Course Coordinator, on 9752 3013. Do we have someone who is a photography buff and would like to offer, for example, a course on Digital Photography; a keen gardener who could share tips or lead a group around interesting gardens in Busselton; a person who could teach a language or a cooking class???

FOR YOUR DIARIES

Friday 23rd September TOPICAL TALK- Mandi Cooper from Villa Carlotta Travel (a Busselton based business) will present one of their community talks, focusing on the variety of holidays they offer. For the travellers among us, an ideal time to be looking ahead! Busselton Family Centre, Kent St, 2-4pm. Visitors welcome. (See flyer)

Friday 14th October AGM and OPEN DAY (details above). **Please make a special note** of this as the Committee needs to have a quorum of financial members and in this case that means a minimum of 54! Further information, proxy voting forms etc will be forwarded closer to the date.

Friday 28th October Forward notice - last **TOPICAL TALK** for the year will be presented by Richard Rennie from the Light and Sound Discovery Centre, based in Perth. Details of the specific topic will be sent closer to the date. Richard, a retired teacher, is a collector extraordinaire. You can Google information about his Centre.

SNIPPETS

1. One for the writers! A local Writing Group, 'Just Write', is hosting a short story workshop to be presented by Perth author Laurie Steed. **Wednesday 21st September**, 7-9pm at the Busselton Family Centre, \$25. For booking or further information, please ring Jodie How on 0401 134 439.
2. COTA presentation of a talk on **Cyber Crime**, hosted by Libby Mettam, MLA, to be held at the Busselton Senior Citizens Centre, Tuesday 25th October, 1.30pm start. For further information please contact the Centre on 97522232

FEEDBACK

A very nice 'pat on the back' for Nat U3a comes from Ann Fink, a great role model to us all.

What would I do without Naturaliste U3A?

I came to Busselton about 8 years ago and at that time had only one friend. Then I met a lovely lady who told me about all the things she was doing through U3A. Taking up my courage I joined and haven't looked back. My life is now filled with interesting things to do. I have attended a range of great courses and have met many like-minded people. So, thank you very much Nat U3A for making such a difference to my life. Ann Fink

As always, your feedback regarding the newsletter, courses or events is welcome, as are contributions.

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The hard copy version of this newsletter has been printed courtesy of the office of Libby Mettam, MLA