



STAY CONNECTED

CENTRAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER

ANNE RICHARDSON SYDNEY U3A VP EDUCATION

It is with great excitement and heartfelt appreciation that I assume the role of Sydney U3A VP Education following the conclusion of Dianne Ekert's successful three-year term in this position.

The role is a challenging one as it involves so many aspects vital to fulfilling the aims of U3A- *to foster and promote the melding of lifelong learning, creativity, exercise and community interaction so that the third age is truly the age of reinvention, rejuvenation, renewal and redirection.*

It is my pleasure to work alongside the Regional Course coordinators (RCCs) who are responsible for all seven regions as together we strive to fulfill these aims.

On recently meeting all these volunteer RCCs and their assistants it was obvious to me how dedicated and committed each one was in enhancing the experience of all Sydney U3A members. RCCs are responsible for working with their enormous team of venue coordinators, presenters and booking secretaries to create the best sessions across a wide variety of topics for all of you to enjoy.

Let me introduce our wonderful RCCs- Anne Hall (City and Inner West), Sandra See (acting-Eastern), Jim Sloan (Endeavour), Sue Bailey (Great Western), Rosemarie Einstein (Harbourside North), Runa Schmidt-Muller

(Northern Beaches) and Pauline Holbrook (Upper North).



Each RCC has met the recent unexpected challenges of this COVID-19 era as best they could. U3A members can be proud of the efforts being made by Presidents, RCCs and others passionately involved in U3A to implement talks via Zoom as well as via emails or by whatever other means were appropriate to the needs of the members.

Prior to undertaking my new role, I was Secretary of U3A Harbourside North – a position which allowed me to become aware of all that happens behind the scenes to make Sydney U3A the great success it is.

In my other life I have been fortunate enough to have a wonderful husband, two great children and two grandchildren. My career concentrated on 35 years of teaching both in state and private schools. During my last 27 years in one private school I enjoyed being a Latin teacher, HOD Languages, Director of Languages and then Director of Student Support and finally Head of Middle School.

Since my retirement in 2008 I have been President of Zonta, President of a bowling club, a volunteer for Harbour Trust on Cockatoo Island and North Head, assistant secretary of my Estonian sorority Filiae Patriae, a member of a book club, attending some 23 theatre performances per year and various other social

encounters. My life has been and continues to be very full and fascinating. However, one of my most meaningful experiences in retirement has been with Sydney U3A.

I am delighted and honoured to dedicate my efforts to the further successes of this wonderful organisation.

Anne Richardson- VP Education- vpeducation.sydneyu3a@gmail.com

Missing your regular U3A Sessions?



You are not alone; we are all in the same boat. I'm sure that you will be pleased that many regions are already looking at providing online meetings – indeed, some venues have already started doing this. It is great fun – although you are sitting at your computer or tablet and are not in the same room, each participant's photo is shown on the screen. It's great to remember what everyone looks like!

Judy has asked me to make recommendations to the Board of Management on how we should expedite the use of online meetings. I have set up a team that is actively working to get

this started as soon as possible.

Some of you may have heard of **"ZOOM"**. It is a software package designed just for this purpose and we plan to use it. If you have not heard of Zoom and want to know more about it, I urge you to go to <https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/03/18/quick-info-how-to-zoom-new-videos/>

Here you will find excellent, short videos that will tell you all you need to know. Do have a look. We hope that it will make you as excited as we are. Upper North has already held some Zoom meetings and Greater Western plans to start this week, so many of us are lagging. We hope to fix that as soon as we can.

Looking forward to seeing some of you online

Michael Suckling President Harbourside North.

GREATER WESTERN UPDATE

Sue Bailey

Course Coordinator Greater Western

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Single Session Tuesdays

Our "Single Session Tuesdays" recommenced from 14/4/2020. Some of our presenters have agreed to do their presentations on Zoom and some have also offered to do additional presentations. I've bought a subscription so we're not limited to 40 mins.

On 28 April Noel Phelan from the National Maritime Museum will tell two stories: "Wooden Boats and Iron Men", the Halvorsen story and also the story of the Japanese Midget Submarine attack on Sydney Harbour.

"Emerging Science"

24 April: Our next presentation is by PhD candidate Scarlett Kong.

"Smart Engineering and Design of Materials for the Future"

This workshop will explore how and why materials behaviour the way they do. We will investigate how the physical and mechanical properties of materials are linked to their microstructure and how we can engineer and alter their properties for specific applications. These will include smart materials used in space and for biomedical implants. The interactive activities will include performing

mechanical testing on everyday materials, using elasticity for target practice, playing with Shape Memory Alloys and deconstructing computer hard drives.

If you are interested in attending either of these presentations, please send me an email. Closer to the time, I'll send you the link as well as a document listing a number of YouTube

clips to help you connect to Zoom (if you need it).

Don't forget our GWN Writers Online. Write a story or poem using one, two or three of the prompts announced monthly in the Greater Western Newsletter. Submissions received via email will be included in the following issue. See the current newsletter for prompts and deadlines.

WHAT I DID IN MY U3A HOLIDAY

Nora Hinchon

I imagine that if your 2020 diary looks something like mine, it doesn't make for interesting reading. The word "CANCELLED" has been written over every entry of mine – the opera, two plays, the gym, my Italian class, lunch with friends, the hairdresser and 20 different U3A talks my husband John Flint and I were scheduled to give between mid-March and the end of June.

I call Monday 23rd March "the day the music died". Early that morning I went to the gym, but it was closed a few hours later. I had morning coffee with friends, but it was a "last hurrah" as all cafes and restaurants closed for normal business at noon. Our U3A talk on Southern Italy planned for that day had been cancelled, as had a function we were looking forward to attending at the Ensemble Theatre with David Williamson as the guest of honour.

Two days later, I borrowed a pile of books from two of my local public libraries. As it turned out, it was to be their last day of operation before COVID-19 rules put them out of action. We all laughed at the runs on toilet paper at the supermarkets, but within a matter of days, other more essential supermarket products became scarce, and life changed for us all.

Those of us over 70 were made to feel redundant in many ways, even if we were assured, patronizingly, that it was for our own good. Lumped into a category called "the elderly", a term which many old people find offensive, we were instructed to stay home. The "old guy" at Bunnings who had helped the customers for years was "let go". A fiercely fit friend in her early 70s was informed that she was no longer needed as a volunteer for meals

on wheels deliveries, a job she has done for the past ten years.

For the first time, the whole world is fighting the same unseen enemy, which is no respecter of persons – rich or poor. Despite the limitations to our lives and the changing state of our finances, we have all been given a gift – time. With that gift comes – choices.

Talking to family and friends by phone, these were some of the pluses they mentioned about CVT [Coronavirus Time]:

"I'm saving money, and eating less. I'm drinking less too."

"I'm having a big cleanout of all my cupboards."

"I'm reading more for pleasure."

"I'm re-potting all my plants."

"I've got stuck into the historical novel I'm writing."

"I'm actually enjoying myself."

My niece and nephew are trying to get some order into the home schooling of their son, aged six, who only started in the kindergarten class six weeks in advance of the school's closure. My nephew said to his little boy, "Between the hours of nine and three, you will call me 'sir'. After that, you can call me 'Daddy.'"

Many of you are probably missing the social interaction that you get from attending U3A sessions, as well as the intellectual stimulus. John and I are pleased that we have those 20 cancelled talks completed, and if we are asked to present them at a later date, they will be ready to go. It has given us the opportunity to make an early start on presentations we have been asked to do in late 2020 and next year.

I am currently working on a talk to be given at Mosman Art Gallery in November this year – assuming that all is back to normal by then. It is about George Bernard Shaw, and the presentation will be an extension of a shorter talk given by me at the 2020 Writers Festival at Katoomba, but more about that in my next article for Harbourside North.

I intend to include something about Shaw's play *The Doctor's Dilemma* in November. This play could have been written about CVT [Coronavirus Time]. If you don't know this work, let me tell something of the theme. It concerns a doctor, Sir Colenso Ridgeon, who has discovered a new cure for tuberculosis, but



he only has room for one more patient. It's about the allocation of scarce medical resources. This is the doctor's moral dilemma. Two patients present themselves. One patient is a colleague - an honest, hardworking doctor who treats poor people, who can seldom afford to pay him. The other is a young, charming rogue (we would call him a bludger), but a very gifted artist.

One of the characters in the play says: "To me, it's a plain choice between a man and a lot of pictures."

Sir Colenso replies: "It's easier to replace a dead man than a good picture."

The play was adapted for the screen, starring some very famous actors, including Dirk Bogarde. You may be able to get hold of the DVD, otherwise I'll tell you more about it in November.

THE 3RD AGE ROCK ORCHESTRA

February and March saw a busy time for Northern Beaches U3A's 3rd Age Rock Orchestra under the baton of U3A member Harvey Broadbent AM. Since its establishment



in February 2018 the orchestra has grown to more than 35 instrumentalists and singers and has usually been meeting and playing in the Narrabeen Baptist Church auditorium on one afternoon each week.

All instrumentalists and singers are U3A members, retirees and amateur players at various stages of progress on their instruments. The common thread is the joy, fun and stimulation of playing popular music together. The orchestra has had several public performances and its repertoire includes classic rock and rock ballads from the 1950's to the present day.

After their first concert in September 2018, the orchestra had a busy year in 2019. They played at seniors' events at the Dee Why RSL and in Mosman and staged a free concert at Narrabeen. They have contributed to two fundraising events for the Balgowlah Rotary Club and an end of year fundraiser for drought relief in Narrabeen.

The 3ARO made two contributions to the 2020 NSW Seniors Festival, supported by NB U3A.



A Rock and Roll Dance at Forestville Memorial Hall in February was attended by around 200 seniors dancing the afternoon away. The orchestra followed up with a similar number, all in good voice, at the Sing Along to The Soundtrack of Your Life in the Narrabeen Baptist Church auditorium in March which also raised funds for the bushfire crisis.

The 3ARO thanks the NB U3A committee for their valuable support and especially Robin Field for leading her group of refreshment volunteers.

Now of course with U3A activities curtailed due to the Corona Virus pandemic the orchestra is also in shut down till further notice and has had to cancel its weekly rehearsals and two upcoming performances.

Harvey Broadbent reports that members are keeping in touch through social media and he's found a way of getting the orchestra to actually play together on-line from their own homes via Zoom. So the music will go on and on! He's also working on recording a Zoom playing session to put up on You Tube. Stay tuned...

The 3ARO sends its best wishes out to all its faithful followers wishing them a safe time during the next few months

STAYING IN TOUCH WHILE STAYING AT HOME

So many galleries, museums, theatres and other organisations have very generously opened their virtual doors to the public for free. Access to the internet allows us to explore famous institutions and view world class entertainment. Some of the very many offers are below. Just search for the particular site in your search engine and follow the links to "at home" experiences.

The **Guggenheim** and **MoMA** (New York)

Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam)

National Gallery (London)

Closer to home, the **Sydney Opera House** has some excellent videos, articles and podcasts and some of these will change from week to week.

The **Australian Ballet** is showing recordings of its ballets. The Sleeping Beauty is currently available and is a joy to watch.

Similarly **NT Live** is showing plays, filmed during live performances in London theatres, with a different play each week.

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CENTRAL OFFICE IS CURRENTLY CLOSED DUE TO COVID-19

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