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## CITY & INNER WEST REGION NEWSLETTER JULY 2020

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Are you all enjoying our gradual emergence from lockdown? I know how much we were all looking forward to it but it has come as a surprise just how much of a challenge it still remains. At U3A we are looking forward to an official resumption of activities on 31<sup>st</sup> August but it is evident now that it is not that straightforward so we thought it would be useful to give our members the background to the hurdles we have to overcome before we can get back to anywhere near normal.

Arrangements need to be made with a variety of bodies and in compliance with NSW Health Department and venue owner requirements. Some courses might commence prior to the August date, but others may take longer than that depending on the venues.

Our recent survey showed that a large majority of members very much want to return to classes, but at the same time are anxious about social distancing in class and having to use public transport. With the groups which said no or maybe - it was for the same reasons.

So this brings us to our major problem - our venues. It has become apparent that there is no coordination between Councils and we are being confronted with different requirements for each council. At the time of writing, none of the councils in our local government area have given a date that we can resume though this may have changed by the time you read this letter. In addition to this we have to comply with individual council Covid-19 safety plans, and also provide them with our own Covid-19 plan. Apart from council venues, we hold classes in a variety of other premises and of course have to comply with their requirements. This means it is quite likely that classes will return in stages as some venues might open sooner than others. Your committee is now working towards the reopening of classes as soon as possible once we have overcome the hurdles along the way.

At our meeting today (via Zoom), the U3A Board of Management approved the U3A Covid-19 Policy. The wording is more authoritarian than we would like, and the conditions pose some difficulties for us. However it was written after consultation with the Department of Health so we have to make the best of it. One of the requirements is that every member be provided with a copy and you will receive this shortly in the Stay-Connected Newsletter. It will also be mailed to the 600 members who haven't given us an email address. While the conditions in the document could be considered somewhat onerous, it is about the issues which concern us all - our safety and how to achieve it.

For instance, the Policy includes such things as leaders to bring their own hand sanitisers and disinfectant wipes for members' use and to clean down equipment if used, even though many venues also provide it. Perhaps someone from the class will volunteer to do this since the leaders have enough responsibilities already. Many of us are now in the habit of having hand sanitiser on us whenever we all go out and we could continue this when attending class.

Attendance sheets showing each member with phone number and email address need to be completed at each meeting. This is our current practice but it will now have to be rigidly enforced as it is government requirement and some councils require us to provide them with a copy.

We also have to deal with the government changing requirements frequently. The Venue Coordinators are currently talking to leaders and venue owners to see how this will work in practice. Right now, the social distancing is the biggest issue for us as this reduces the class numbers. This can change within days when the government revises its policy but makes it very hard to work out what to do just now.

### **Course Book**

Because of all the unknowns and the time it takes to prepare the printed course book, no Semester 2 course book will be printed. With all the difficulties facing us, there is little point in trying to schedule new courses. Therefore the classes on offer are those in the Semester 1 course book. To check on re-opening of classes, please contact either the course leader, secretary or coordinator. The full course book is available on our website and changes will be made as they occur. Members without email will be receiving the printed pages for their region by mail. Sending them the whole book is too expensive - a mail out in a letter size envelope will cost around \$600, so sending them the whole book is not viable.

The decision to extend the membership by 100 days has impacted upon our finances, and obviously very few people have joined while we have not been able to offer classes. So it is imperative that we carefully manage our finances responsibly. While we have not had to pay venue rental for three months, we have had to pay the rent on the city office which is substantial and there are other fixed costs such as public liability insurance, and the various licensing fees which also have been paid.

### **Where to from here?**

Well initially, for some time some things will be a little different. The social aspect of our meetings is a really enjoyable part of our day. Under current policies we won't be able to use the venue kitchens to make tea and coffee. But U3A members are nothing if not versatile and where possible we can find a coffee after class or bring our own drink and snack.

We are still aiming for a full opening by 31<sup>st</sup> August. I know members are really looking forward to re-joining classes and catching up with U3A friends, and I am confident that meeting up with our classmates again, and the stimulation we enjoy from our various classes, will lift our spirits until we see the end of this disruption to all our lives.

Jennifer Waldron

President, Sydney U3A City & Inner West Region

## INSPIRING SPEECHES - TED TALKS - JANE FONDA'S THE THIRD ACT

TED is a non-profit making social media platform committed to spreading ideas usually in the form of a short, powerful talk (18 minutes) and covering all topics. One popular TED Talk was given by Jane Fonda in 2012 and still resonates today:



*"There have been many revolutions over the last century, but perhaps none as significant as the longevity revolution. We are living an average today 34 years longer than our great grandparents did - think about that. That's an entire second adult lifetime that's been added to our lifespan. And yet, for the most part our culture has not*



*come to terms with what this means. We're still living with the old paradigm of age as an arch. That's the metaphor, the old metaphor. You're born, you peak at midlife and decline into decrepitude...*

*But, many people today - philosophers, artists, doctors and scientists are taking a new look at what I call 'the third act' the last three decades of life...this is actually a developmental stage of life with its own significance, as different from midlife as adolescence is from childhood. And they are asking...we should all be asking: How do we use this time? How do we live it successfully? What is the appropriate new metaphor for aging?*

*...I have come to find that a more appropriate metaphor for aging is a staircase. The upward ascension of the human spirit, bringing us into wisdom, wholeness and authenticity...*

Introduction - extract from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Act TED Talk by Jane Fonda Jan 4 2012.

Photographs: Jane Fonda pinterest.com

link to talk: [https://www.ted.com>jane\\_fonda\\_life\\_s\\_third\\_act](https://www.ted.com>jane_fonda_life_s_third_act)

Thank you Ron Shapiro for alerting us to this gem!

### VALE FAY MACKENZIE-EDMONDS



*Condolences are sent to all who knew Fay Mackenzie-Edmonds who passed away earlier this month.*

*Fay took over the leadership of the Discussion Group at Hannaford in 2015 when former leader Frances Stone became unable to continue. This group has been ongoing for many years, first in Frances' own home in Rozelle and subsequently at the Hannaford Centre under the current leadership of Yvonne Wingrave. Fay was a very charismatic leader and will be missed by all her U3A friends.*

Barbara Burton

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## ZOOM SESSIONS - FRIDAY MORNINGS FROM 10:30AM

Our Zoom sessions, originating from our Friday Mornings at Leichhardt Library are going 'gangbusters' with John Hepworth hosting each session with his usual efficiency. John is our 'treasure' and we thank him for his generous sponsorship of these sessions, his work behind the scenes, and his enthusiasm for maintaining a cohesive group while welcoming newcomers to each Zoom session.

So far we have had a variety of topics, mostly one-offs, but with some of our speakers who have more to offer, some of our topics will extend over two or three weeks. Unfortunately, our screens are not large enough to accommodate everyone's face, but we know you are there, and hoping you are all enjoying the experience of being part of this 'safe' way of keeping in touch.

For the coming month, our sessions will be as follows:

**3 July: SPEAKER: IAN BRYCE: THE PHYSICS OF THE MIND: Exploring Sentience, Freewill, and Morality.**

**10 July: SPEAKER: HIMANSHU JHALA: Arabs and the Arab World**

**17 July: SPEAKER: HIMANSHU JHALA: The Ottomans**

**24 July: SPEAKER: HIMANSHU JHALA: Europeans in Africa**

*(These three talks are in chronological order of their impact in world history)*

**31 July & 7 August: SPEAKER: JANINE KITSON - LITHGOW'S GARDENS OF STONE Parts 1 & 2**

In August we hope to present the following:

**14 Aug: SPEAKER: LAURIE WILSON - SYMMETRY**

**21 Aug: SPEAKER: ROSALIND STRONG - KEEPING WOMEN OUT OF PRISON**

More to come.....

So this is the way of the future for our Friday Morning sessions. The venue at Leichhardt Library is too small and too enclosed for us to be confident of its viability as a venue for our demographic, so we have no plans at the moment to resume face-to-face sessions at this venue. If the scientists of the world stumble across an anti-virus, this may all change, but until then, we will welcome you all to our online sessions.

Stay safe and keep enjoying the 'Zoom'.

Barbara Burton - Venue Coordinator





A Belated Thank You to all U3A Volunteers!

To our President Jenny & Committee for all the work behind the scenes during these extraordinary times - to our Leaders and wonderful Venue Coordinators - to our speakers and organisers and all venue helpers and, to those hard working 'Zoom' session hosts who have kept the *home fires burning!*

**THANK YOU!**

Please send articles or "snippets" for the Newsletter to [u3a.innerwest@gmail.com](mailto:u3a.innerwest@gmail.com)  
Thank you everyone for your contributions this month - Ed.



**WE WILL BE BACK VERY SOON**  
**IN SHARING - GROWING -SOCIALISING**  
**& WITH RENEWED PASSION!**

