



STAY CONNECTED CENTRAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER



Welcome back to Volume 11 of Stay Connected

The COVID-19 monster continues to cause havoc in the community. To members attending the limited number of face-to-face classes currently running - be assured that Sydney U3A is expending every effort to comply with NSW Health and venue owner requirements. We ask that you please also practice safe distancing and observe all Covid-19 safe policy requirements at all times. **You may also want to consider wearing a mask as recommended by health authorities.** We ask that you listen to the news broadcasts on the virus and keep up to date with changing requirements. Please also read Joy Pegler's article later in this volume of *Stay Connected*. We all have a responsibility to ourselves and to the community. Please do not attend any class if you are unwell no matter how slight the symptoms. Check out the regional pages on the web for details of Zoom - all regions are different.

Dianne Ekert
VP Public Relations
Sydney U3A Inc

CENTRAL OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Ever given thought to the admin duties associated with running an organisation with 6000 or so members? Just what do our dedicated central office volunteers do?

These unsung volunteers, some of whom have been volunteering for 20 or so year, come from all seven regions. They arrive at central office in all weathers to ensure the admin work happens.

Groups work in teams of 3 or 4 on a fortnightly rota, from 10:00 am to 1:00pm each weekday. Using the MyU3A database computer system, the main tasks are processing subscription payments and manning the telephones for members' enquiries.

Each day begins with printing off membership cards for new and renewing members whose payments had been processed the previous day. These then require checking against daily reports, preparing for mailing and making any corrections to misprinted cards.

When the post arrives, the mail is opened, and the cheques processed. Once all payments have been processed a reconciliation is produced and a banking form printed to take to our bank for paying in.

All volunteers receive full training in the operating systems and alternate undertaking the different activities to ensure they are fully conversant with all aspects of the office procedures.

The volunteer responsible for reception will check on all voicemail messages and other missed calls as well as answering the telephone and responding to any emails.

General office duties such as filing and photocopying are undertaken as required. The volunteers, like all members of our Sydney U3A family, enjoy an opportunity for socialising and, with many of our team members, their interactions have led to long friendships.

FROM JILL MCLELLAND – ENDEAVOUR

Jill's class, *Photobooks for Absolute Beginners* teaches members how to use a photobook software package. Members also receive advice as to choosing the book type, covers, theme, layouts, text and embellishments. Too often in this electronic age we simply take photos with our phone and do nothing with them! Photobooks help preserve our memories.



FREE WEBINAR - In Conversation with James Bradley

Author James Bradley will be talking about his new book *Ghost Species* in this free webinar. *Ghost Species* by James Bradley - When scientist Kate Larkin joins a secretive project to re-engineer the climate by resurrecting extinct species, she becomes enmeshed in another, even more clandestine program to recreate our long-lost relatives, the Neanderthals. A haunting tale and gripping exploration of the past, present and future of humanity.

Public Libraries NSW, City of Parramatta Libraries and in association with Penguin Books Australia presents this FREE online author talk will be presented via Zoom with a Q & A session August 20. <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/in-conversation-with-james-bradley-via-zoom-webinar-tickets-114361381972>

FROM IAN THOMPSON, NORTHER BEACHES REGION

U3A is Zooming ahead! - An exciting platform for Sydney U3A

The popularity of video conferencing during lockdown has made Zoom synonymous with online learning. Zoom has enabled U3A members to enjoy presentations from a diverse range of excellent speakers across a diverse range of topics. U3A is indebted to our Course Leaders and Speakers, including those who are not members, but who are true friends of Sydney U3A.

Many of our members consider Zoom sessions as 'special' and something that they look forward to - the way they used to look forward to long-distance phone calls back in the day!

Our wide-ranging subjects include ancient and modern history, physics, astronomy, climate change, medicine, health, zoology and military history - something for everyone!

Those magnificent supporters of Sydney U3A who have contributed are the Sydney Harbour Trust and National Maritime Museum together with science students from UNSW who have provided members with research that they are embarking on towards their PhD.

One significant advantage of Zoom is that it brings our seven regions closer. It closes the physical distances that sometimes limits members from attending face-to-face sessions. In some cases, state and international boundaries have been crossed with members waiting for opportunities to travel back home.

Zoom does not replace our ever-popular face-to-face meetings, but it does give members the opportunity to chat online in a 'virtual face-to-face' environment. Many members have renewed lost acquaintances and are now meeting and chatting on the Zoom platform.

Several of our Zoom sessions open their 'rooms' early to allow interaction. The majority of the sessions also have a 'virtual refreshment break'- time stretch legs or grab a 'cuppa' - an intermission. Question time is always popular.

FROM LAURIE WILSON FACEBOOK EDITOR

U3A on Facebook

As we told you in the last edition of Stay Connected, Sydney U3A Inc has a Facebook page. U3A's move, due to COVID-19, to almost exclusively offer online activities is now augmented by a presence on Facebook, which is the world's largest social media platform, with 2.6 billion active users worldwide.

Several Sydney regions already have a Facebook presence, and the Sydney U3A page is highlighting U3A activities across the whole Sydney region, as well as being an external showcase for Sydney U3A. Up to early August, we have 107 followers. If you would like your activity highlighted, contact laurie.wilson@optusnet.com.au we prefer items which have photographs because Facebook is such a visual medium. Please ensure that permission is obtained from anyone appearing in the photos.

<https://www.facebook.com/sydneyu3a>



THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN BY JOY PEGLER A LONG-STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER OF CITY AND INNER WEST REGION. IT APPEARED IN THE C&IW'S NEWSLETTER. JOY HAS KINDLY GIVEN PERMISSION FOR HER OBSERVATIONS TO BE REPEATED IN STAY CONNECTED FOR A WIDER SYDNEY U3A AUDIENCE

"SOME THOUGHTS on PERSONAL RISK and COVID-19 by Joy Pegler

Of course, over the past few weeks there has been a depressing sequence of news about COVID-19. However, in early July an article in the online journal 'The New Daily' really grabbed my attention. It reported that 200 scientists from around the world had criticised the WHO for not warning that the virus can readily be transmitted through aerosols as well as by direct contamination. As a result, I began recalling what I learnt of airborne particulates during my employment as a safety officer in a government research facility. The following paragraphs briefly condense my thoughts about this issue.

Firstly, respirable dusts and aerosols (i.e. those that can reach the lungs) have particle sizes less than 10 microns (a micron is a millionth of a metre). Those less than 0.3 microns can "float", that is they remain airborne without settling. We all experienced this during the recent summer bushfires when smoke haze enveloped the city for many weeks. The average size of COVID-19 particles is 0.12 microns. Hence the concerns that separation distances between persons may be insufficient to lower the inhalation risk as contaminated aerosol can obviously move much further than 1.5 metres between individuals.

Secondly, large indoor venues are air-conditioned so most of the air is just recirculating within the premises. Any COVID-19 in the air can gently waft around before being extracted, eventually leak from the building, settle on a surface or die. Or alternatively be inhaled.

So, what is my conclusion from all of the above? Risk is very difficult to quantify. But I have decided to be very conservative about entering any large air-conditioned venue. Going to some may be essential but maybe not to others. Wearing a face mask seems sensible. As SU3A members we follow the recommendations of the NSW Department of Health when it comes to running and attending our courses. But over and above this, it is still worthwhile to also do our own personal risk assessment - we are after all a vulnerable section of the population.

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Feedback welcome to **vppr.sydneyu3a@gmail.com**

SHARING GROWING SOCIALISING PASSION

THIS ARTICLE IS NOT RELATED TO A SYDNEY U3A PROJECT. PROFESSOR KAARIN ANSTEY OF UNSW ORGANISED DIRECTLY WITH U3A PRESIDENT, JUDY HARRIS, TO ALERT MEMBERS OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN HER PROJECT.

PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT SYDNEY U3A OFFICE – ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO PROFESSOR ANSTEY AND/OR HER TEAM – CONTACT DETAILS BELOW

Online research opportunities

Professor Kaarin Anstey and her team at Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) and the University of New South Wales have 2 new research opportunities. They would like your input to help shape their research into healthy aging. Please read the information below, and if interested click on the link provided or contact the study team. You are welcome to be involved in one or both of the studies providing you meet the criteria explained below.

OPPORTUNITY 1 Healthy Aging, Memory and Technology Survey

We are asking for volunteers to complete an anonymous **30-40-minute online survey**. This survey will ask about your current lifestyle, your thoughts and actions towards healthy living and about your use of technology. Professor Anstey and her team are aiming to develop an online intervention to help manage some of the negative risk factors associated with aging. This survey allows you to give valued input to this research and potentially help shape health care interventions in the future.

To take part, you need to be:

- A mature adult or senior, aged between 45-100 years old, who is interested in maintaining a healthy memory
- Able to complete an **online** survey

[Click here to access the survey](#)

Alternatively, you can visit NeuRA's website: <https://www.neura.edu.au/volunteer/healthy-ageing/> If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Amos, the Project Manager - Email: healthyaging@neura.edu.au
Telephone: [+61 2 9399 1853](tel:+61293991853)

OPPORTUNITY 2 Age-Based Information and Cognitive Tasks Study

We are asking for volunteers to complete a **45 minute** online psychological research study. This study aims to investigate the impact of age-related information on the completion of cognitive tasks by older adults. In this study, you will receive age-based information, complete a cognitive task and answer some accompanying self-reported questions. To take part, you need to be:

- Over the age of 60 (i.e. 60 years or older)
- Able to complete an **online** questionnaire

As a part of your participation, we cordially invite you to take part in a web-based seminar together with your peers, hosted by the researchers after completion of the research. We will discuss important issues affecting the older adult population that our research is investigating and hope to address any of your questions about the research study. Your participation will help to advance research into these issues and contribute to the formation of effective solutions. If you would like to take part in this study, please contact the researchers by **email** at: ageingpsychology@unsw.edu.au

Researchers: Prof. Kaarin Anstey and Dr. Craig Sinclair

Student Researcher: Daniel Kontorovich