

December 2022 Newsletter

www.u3asoutherngoldcoast.org.au

Phone: (07) 5534 7333 during office hours M-F 9:00-12:00

President's message

As the year draws to a close it's good to reflect on the activities we've undertaken over the past few months so that we can continue our momentum and plan for the future.

We had a very successful Seniors' Month in October starting with the information desk at The Pines shopping centre, where we distributed a multitude of our new flyers. The art and craft exhibition was enjoyed by many visitors with lots of works being sold and an unexpectedly large group turning up for the celebration event. Unfortunately the Bus and Discovery tour was postponed due to bad weather but has been rescheduled for mid-January.

In November we had a tutor thank you event and I was interviewed on radio station 4CRB. We also had two working bees at Boyd Street in order to tidy, repair and clean as well as employing electricians and other contractors to fix longstanding problems at the site. The new member database, called Member Wizard, was successfully introduced after extensive research into its merits.

There are a number of activities already planned for 2023 including two information days in January when members can meet their tutors and a welcome event in February for new members. We also have many new and exciting classes being introduced which will appeal to those of you keen on crafts, sports and general interest.

As always, the Christmas lunch was great fun and for those of you I didn't get to speak to on the day, I wish you a very happy Christmas and all the best for a thoroughly enjoyable start to the new year.

Liz Logan



Upcoming Events

Renewal days at Boyd St
9:00am to midday
Wednesday, 25th January &
Monday, 30th January

Bus & Discovery tour
Wednesday, 18th January

Classes resume
Monday, 6th February

Welcome new members'
event at Boyd St
Friday, 17th February

Amendment to our vaccination policy

Members are no longer required to be fully vaccinated. This change in policy is in line with Queensland Government health regulations and advice.

We encourage members to continue to monitor their own health and to wear masks and social distance, where possible, and to use hand sanitizer and stay home if feeling unwell.

Welcome to our new Management System, Member Wizard

Introducing a new management system was always going to be a complex task but the time had come to look at making our administrative systems easier and more efficient for both members and office volunteers. Over the years our membership database, financial system and class schedules had developed independently resulting in frequent overlaps and repetition of data. Using an integrated system which operated seamlessly over all data was the obvious answer and it was important to make sure that any new system was user-friendly and suited our particular needs.

Research into updating our database started more than two years ago and included several dead ends before we found Member Wizard. A team consisting of Alison (Membership Officer), Peter (Webmaster) and myself visited U3A Mt Tamborine and U3A Redcliffe. Redcliffe had been using Member Wizard for several years and Mt Tamborine had only just started. We were very impressed with how the system had progressed since we originally looked at it.

Following our site visits we contacted the Member Wizard system developers to talk about our specific requirements, costs and timeframes. Peter's extensive techie skills were invaluable in this part of the process. After a training session in October, assurances of help when we needed it and many hours of testing and tweaking data in the test database we were ready to go live.

The advantages of the new database for members is that the system is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week; you won't need to fill in forms every year when renewing; fees can be paid online by direct deposit or credit card; information about courses is more comprehensive and up-to-date; communicating with class members is easier; and events can be booked and paid for online. The main advantage for office volunteers, tutors and committee members is that data only needs to be entered once which will greatly reduce the risk of error and allow all information to be instantly available.

***One of many positive comments we have received said:
"Congratulations to all involved on the new online membership system. I know it has been a long time in the making but the result is worth the effort. Despite the somewhat daunting instructions I decided to give it a go and hey presto my enrolment was completed with a receipt delivered to my inbox immediately! Re enrolling has never been so easy and from the comfort of my own home!"***

We have been running training sessions and have made ourselves available for one-on-one help for anyone who might not be comfortable in using the new system. While there have been a few minor teething problems, generally feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with members and office volunteers being surprised by how easy the system is to use. For anyone not yet enrolled or joined please give it a try at home. The system will still be available even when the office is closed over the Christmas holidays. If you need any help, email the office and we will contact you.

By Irene Sachs, Vice President

Tutor Thank You Event



It is with much gratitude that I write to say that our tutors continued their wonderful work in 2022, despite the challenges of Covid and border restrictions. U3A Southern Gold Coast is blessed with a band of committed and talented tutors who happily volunteer their time as well as their expertise.

On Friday, 4th November, Management Committee members and tutors met together for an end of year thank you and networking opportunity. It was wonderful to hear the tutors' passion about their work, and for newer members to put faces to names.

Our activities cover such a diverse range of interests, and in 2023 we will be able to broaden the range even further; for instance: There will be a cooking course where members may embark on learning the delights of recipes from around the world. "Crafty" people may try their hands at macrame, and there will be a new 10-week course titled "Strategic Joy - peace and wellbeing in retirement". Lovers of dance might choose "Dance like no one is watching", and those wanting outdoor exercise might like to try pickleball or croquet.



Our tutors come from all walks of life, and we are always looking for new ideas. If you have any interests to share, we would love to hear from you.

By Meg Johnson, Program Manager

Radio interview



When I was invited to do an interview on radio 4CRB (89.3FM) I felt a little nervous, to say the least. Having to speak to a large group of radio listeners was daunting. I was also concerned about providing accurate information but it was too good a chance, to promote U3A, to pass up the opportunity.

Merryn, who interviewed me offered some good tips which helped boost my confidence. The 10 minute talk went quite well, after a shaky start, and it was aired on Friday, 18th November. Anyone wanting to hear it can access an excerpt via a link from our website.

By Liz Logan, President

Working Bees

A keen group of members and partners turned up at Boyd Street in the early hours of two Saturday mornings in November. In hand were gardening equipment, cleaning products, paint and tool sets.

As a result of the two working bees the garden is now looking much tidier. The shed has been cleared of outdated and broken items and cabinets and other office cupboards have been emptied and moved so that more rooms are free to use.

This means that the building is now in a better state for classes, events and meetings. There's still more to be done but we're on our way to making the place much more presentable and usable. It's hoped that more regular working bees can be arranged in the future.

The 18+ volunteers who gave up their free time are to be commended - great work team!



Funding for office equipment

The Australian Government granted funding to us earlier this year for office and teaching equipment through their Stronger Communities Program.

As a result we've purchased a new desktop computer box, monitor, keyboard and mouse as well as a new laptop computer. We've also been able to buy a new projector screen to assist tutors in their classes.

We thank the Hon Karen Andrews MP, who supported our application, which has enabled us to keep our membership fees as low as possible, as we don't have to outlay funds on equipment.

Vale Nancy Murphy



The community of U3A Southern Gold Coast was saddened to learn of the passing of Nancy Murphy who joined U3A in 2003.

Nancy was a very active member enjoying her literature and exercise classes. She was a talented musician and played both the piano and piano accordion and used these instruments as the Tutor for the singing group over a number of years.

Ill health caused Nancy to retire and she passed away on Thursday, 27th October this year.

Vale, the Amazing Susanne Corfield

The Intermediate Italian Class was shocked and saddened by the death of their much loved tutor, Susanne Corfield. Susanne began teaching Italian to a beginner's class some eight years ago and over time took that class to the intermediate level and was in the process of moving the class to the advanced level. Two members of the original class, Fiona Staats and Lynne Baker, are still members of the current class. During the last couple of years Susanne had brief episodes of ill health including a hip and a knee replacement. However immediately she felt slightly better, she was back with the class.

Susanne's incredible intellect and amazing memory was always on display to her students. Whilst Susanne did not spend extended times living in Italy, her exposure to the language was enhanced by short holiday stints and a dedicated study of the language and culture. Unsurprisingly, she soon became a fluent speaker. Susanne's class was a place of learning enjoyment, friendship and a lot of fun. In her school, university and subsequent professional life, Susanne was an exceptionally high achiever and in the nicest way encouraged her students to work towards achieving their individual language goals. We loved listening to her many stories and interesting facts that she shared with us.



Most people have memories of influential teachers in their early lives and our class can attest that these memories also extend to studies later in life. To all of us Susanne was that influential person and we will greatly miss her. However I know we will constantly invoke her memory in our class and especially when discussing issues of complex Italian grammar.

Riposa in pace Susanna

Wanted – Editor

Do you like to write?

Are you interested in talking to members and others about their activities and classes and what our U3A has been doing?

We're looking for a talented person to help coordinate our quarterly newsletter. The time commitment is only a few hours per week leading up to the time of production.



You don't need to do any fancy layouts or wrestle with complex programs. An inquiring mind and keen desire to inform people is all that's required.

If you're interested in finding out more, please contact Liz Logan, at email President@u3asoutherngoldcoast.org.au and she can have a chat and send you a Position Description for the role.

Newsletter survey results

The number of people opening the September edition of the newsletter via the website was high. This has assisted the editorial team to conclude that the format was well received.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to give us their feedback and suggestions. Those that responded also helped us to determine that this new format is a positive change. Most found the newsletter very interesting and easy to read.

One respondent asked if contributions from members might be sought and we would definitely welcome suggestions as well as articles and photos in the future.

We have set up an editorial email which is newsletter@u3asoutherngoldcoast.org.au and all messages and contributions will be welcomed.



Please contact the office if you know of a member who is suffering from an illness, is in hospital, recovering from an operation or is grieving the loss of a loved one.

They will then contact Margaret Buchanan who continues to do a wonderful job in handcrafting beautiful cards wishing our members well.

Kirra Office Team

A very big thank you is due to the small - and dedicated - band of volunteers who keep the U3A office open.



The team members are: Tracy, Laurel, Judy, Marg, Christine J, Christine M., Kay and Cathryn.

These people are our organisation's front-of-house; responsible for running the office from 9-12noon every weekday - fielding all manner of enquiries from members, tutors and the public. They are also responsible for the housework and cleaning of both the office and the meeting room next door.

During the last two "Covid" years, there have been extra challenges to deal with, as the office volunteers were tasked with keeping themselves and members up to date with a multitude of ever-changing government health department rules and regulations. This necessarily involved many changes to class times and venues, often made with very short notice.

Through all of this, they have remained a happy, sane and loyal bunch - for which we should all be very grateful!

Our office will reopen on Wednesday, 25th January

By Anne Souter, Office Manager

Art and Craft Exhibition Round-Up

Our Art and Craft Exhibition, held at Kirra Hill Art Gallery during Seniors' Month, was a wonderful success this year with total sales of more than \$1,800. We had a record result of 41 sales of quality paintings and craft items at bargain prices. This was due to a good flow of visitors, who appreciated our hardworking U3A members' work and, from our extensive advertising on two radio stations and various websites as well as posters and flyers.



Our special guest visitor was Cr Gail O'Neill who was invited to come in and select her favourite painting. Barbara Haskey's painting of an interesting landscape was chosen and she received a certificate. We sincerely thank Cr O'Neill for visiting the exhibition and being an important part of it.

Many thanks as well to Alex Kodela, the 18 rostered volunteers and the many U3A artists who participated. Special mention to Barbara Haskey, Heather Leaity and Penny Young who exhibited many beautiful works and were well rewarded with multiple sales.

By Kay West, Art & Craft Exhibition Co-ordinator

Christmas Lunch

Earlier this month a large group of members and friends celebrated the end of classes with a Christmas lunch to be remembered. The Tugun Bowls Club put on a festive feast again this year and, as well as good food, there was a lot more provided to delight us. Blair did a great job as MC introducing Santa and Mrs Claus who handed out some wonderful gifts with much laughter. There was a competition to guess the number of sweets in the lolly jar and lucky door prizes. And what's Christmas without music? We were entertained by the recorder group, singers, ukulele and guitar players who made sure that the spirit of the season was high.



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May your Christmas joys be simple and sweet and many

Wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and
we look forward to enjoying your company in 2023

In the spirit of reconciliation U3A Southern Gold Coast acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.