

# HAWTHORN CAMPUS NOTES VI

July, 1986

## Two Generations Meet

No-one quite knew how the car maintenance course at MLC would work out, and as someone put it "There were a few hiccoughs during the first fortnight". The girls giggled and played the fool a bit, some of the U3A students became impatient, and Thalby Reidy-Crofts, the tutor, was ready to quit. Thalby had at one time been a sargeant-major and was, no doubt, tempted to roar at the girls, but he decided to remain a civilian with good effect.

As a result everyone in the class is now far more informed about cars than they were. U3A student, Jean Miller, says she had no idea what went on under the bonnet before she attended Thalby's class. "Now I know how to start a car in the right manner, before I had problems." More importantly, Jean now understands why and how a car works - what makes it run!

"I've got a whole lot of new skills," she said, "I can check the disc brakes, change the oil, and I know what to do when the car just will not start." In fact the course has made Jean so confident that, if she saw someone in trouble on the road she would now be able to help them.

The school provided a non-technical brochure and an 'old bomb' was available for practical demonstrations and practice. By the end of the course some friendships between the generations were forged and it is interesting to note, that when the girls did their obligatory self-analysis after the course, not one of them mentioned the inter-generational content of the class.

(A new Car Maintenance Course starts this month).



BRILLIANT IDEA!!

Thank you very much for whoever had the brilliant idea to use LARGE PRINT for the *Campus Notes*. Anybody want to buy a used magnifying glass?

Sonya Carrington

## ***INCORPORATION FOR HAWTHORN***

There was a good turn out for the Annual General Meeting which was held in the Chandelier Room of the Hawthorn Town Hall last month. Betty Marginson, Chairperson of the Executive Committee, reported on the progress of the campus and this was followed by discussion regarding incorporation.

The decision to incorporate was carried unanimously and this will bring important advantages, the main one being legal protection for members. As it is necessary to avoid confusion with other bodies, the word 'University' could not be used. Third Age Learning (Hawthorn) was chosen as our official name for purposes of incorporation only. This will not affect our using the name 'University of the Third Age' as a general term. A fuller description of incorporation is available at the U3A office at 24 Wakefield Street should anyone wish to see it.

Following general business, Betty introduced Dr Iain Wallace, Director of Swinburne College, who gave an address entitled 'Can Intelligence be Artificial?'.

### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?**

Dr Wallace expressed the opinion that most new developments in technology commenced by providing a substitute for human effort, which then went on to outdo what can be attained by humans. Originally computers were a device for mathematical calculation as a substitute for human effort. They have now developed into machines for the manipulation of symbols, giving them enormous power, as well as coping with repetitive and tedious tasks. Dr Wallace thinks that in future levels could be attained that would go beyond the capacity of single human beings.

Another field for technology which is being used increasingly is in games such as chess, in which experts are able to externalise, and thus make the right moves. The computer can produce many solutions, only one of which will be ideal, and these solutions much be matched up with those of an expert before the program can be completed.

Dr Wallace went on to explain the new profession of Knowledge Engineering. This means programming the pooled knowledge of experts

which can then be used in an appropriate field. Areas mentioned were - identifying chemical compounds, medical systems and diagnosis, Geology e.g. favourable areas for drilling.

"The striking thing about humans," Dr Wallace said "is the breadth and depth of our capabilities...". We are able to cope with time and machines of staggering capabilities, and he believes that, in the future, the build up of knowledge bases will be enormous.

### **SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

Dr Wallace said that something that is bothering the technological experts is the social and ethical problems involved, and stressed the need to understand the technology if we are to continue to have some control over our society. We are advancing faster, he said, through technology than through biological capabilities. Computers, he believes, are reaching the stage when they will soon be able to think for themselves to a certain extent, and also be able to see.

This was a most interesting talk and we were fortunate to obtain Dr Wallace as a speaker.

### **TUTORS AND TUTORING**

Lively discussion on the structure and presentation of classes dominated the tutors meeting held early in July. Judy Lee and Nan Brown reported on a course in tutoring they attended at the Council of Adult Education (CAE) and this led into general discussion on the subject of structured and unstructured classes. Some subjects, it was agreed, lent themselves more to one or other of these types of presentation. For example, languages need structure while Figures for Fugitives and Philosophy can have a more unstructured approach.

Members brought their own lunch and afterwards discussed a list of questions which Heather Beaton, researcher with Community Education, had drawn up for a research programme. Heather will be available at Wakefield Street on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the next two weeks to hear members' comments. If you would like to take part, please contact Nan Brown at Wakefield Street, telephone 819 8824.

## **U3A – KEEPING THE CONCEPT IN FOCUS**

### **AIMS**

To bring together potential learners and teachers. To provide a pool of students for tutors, and a pool of tutors for students.

### **WHY DOES IT WORK?**

Because people are involved in doing what they want to do, be it studying, tutoring or general administration.

Because everyone involved in U3A is a member - on an equal basis. All pay the subscription fee which allows them to study and/or tutor, or help in the administration under the umbrella of U3A.

### **THE ADMINISTRATION, i.e. MEMBERS.**

- \* Finds and organises venues for classes.
- \* Arranges suitable times for tutors.
- \* Keeps class records
- \* Keeps waiting lists.
- \* Publicises new courses.
- \* Provides a central referral office for messages, etc.
- \* Keeps membership records.
- \* Organises finances.
- \* Provides a legal entity to protect members.

## **Do it Yourself Study**

The 'do-it-yourself' or 'self-help' method of running U3A groups has a lot going for it, being largely facilitated by the students feeling that they have a personal interest in the subject and in making it a success.

The philosophy group at the Hawthorn U3A has now survived for over a year, the first meeting having been held in April 1985. The problem at the beginning was one of choice. In a study extending well over 2,000 years, from Plato and Aristotle to Rawls and other philosophers of today, where was the class to begin? This presented a real conflict and it was not resolved for quite a long time, with many students joining and leaving, but there were five or six people who persisted.

The generous provision of material by Deakin University from their first year program of 20th Century Philosophy, determined the scope, and gave us the resources for our study. The problem has now been resolved very happily. The same texts are now available to all the class, as a basis for discussion and further work at home. There is also the occasional visit by Ron Gilbert of Deakin to guide and to inspire. The group now numbers about 9 or 10 regulars, who feel in control of their own endeavours, the meetings are run 'democratically' as one member describes them, and there is enthusiasm, all of which might perhaps provide encouragement for others.

Joan Drake

### *THE VEIL IS LIFTED*

Figures for Fugitives was a class for those of us who never really understood the elementary arithmetic of our tender youth. Somehow we have blundered through, always fearing and hating the dreaded figures. We were left with the mystery - how do figures work? Would we ever know?

With Phyl Hale as convener we have grouped, emerged and confronted our foe. We have grappled with fractions, decimals, percentages, etc. with reasonable success, with our friend the calculator as umpire. There has been no teacher, but we helped ourselves and each other, aided by books from libraries. For late-starters, we believe we have done quite well, each fulfilling their own needs. We have enjoyed learning, it was comfortable, easy and good fun.

We started this class with numeral patterns, addition and subtraction, and the veil has been lifted at last.

Ida Kirkman

## **MORE ABOUT COURSES**

### **THE LAW AND YOU.**

This five-week course is an extension of last year's Legal Studies for Lawless Laymen and will be conducted by P. Baventer-Coil. Commencing Wednesday, September 17th. Limited places available. convener: Werner Graff

### **ITALIAN**

This class for beginners will be held on Monday afternoons at the Hawthorn Recreation Centre, commencing October 6th. Convener: Helen Gerstmann.

**PUBLIC SPEAKING.**

Leo Dobbin, the convener, is a member of Toastmasters and he runs a very successful class at Monash. There are still three or four places to be filled before we can arrange a similar course.

Please ring 819 8824 for details.

**CONTRACT BRIDGE (An Introduction)**

A new course will commence soon. At least twelve students needed.

Please ring the office if you are interested. Convener: Bill Zimmerman.

**SOCIAL ETHICS.**

There are four sessions for discussion of subjects such as Euthanasia, Withdrawal of Life Support Apparatus, and other such controversial issues.

Convener: John Balfour. Starts July 16th.

**CRAFT - Knitting & Crocheting.**

Do you want to be able to make garments for your grandchildren or yourself? Anyone interested in joining a course of this nature, please contact Wakefield Street. Convener: Alma Bourke.

**LEAD LIGHTING.**

This is another class to be held in conjunction with middle-school girls at M.L.C. as part of the scheme to involve the girls in community activities.

Anyone wishing to take part in this course will be asked to pay \$30 to cover materials needed to make a small lead light panel - 3 places available. Please contact Wakefield Street for further details.

**CURRENT COURSES RECOMMENCING SOON**

Australian History Convener: Martin Merchant Re-commences 11.8.86

Myths & Facts of Ageing Convener: Elizabeth Turner. Commences 25.8.86

Nutrition Convener: Rosemary Hepburn. Commences 11.9.86

Nutrition & Health Convener: Greta Burman. Commences 12.8.86

Relaxation with Guided Imagery Convener: John Balfour Starts October

Car Maintenance Convener: Thalby Reidy-Crofts (see story - Page 1)

New class starts this month.

Social Issues Convener: H. Liffman Commences 22.9.86

Marine Biology Convener: Frances McCallum. Commences 19.8.86.