



# U3A HAWTHORN NEWS

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## WE ARE ALMOST 10 YEARS YOUNG !

On the 29th November, 1984 the inaugural meeting to establish a U3A Campus in Hawthorn was held in the Hawthorn Library.

To celebrate the success of the U3A Movement a Special Achievement Luncheon will be held in conjunction with the other two original U3A's, City and Monash (now Waverley)

This big event will be on Tuesday the 14th March, 1995 in the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria.

Our distinguished speaker for this special occasion will be Sir Zelman Cowen. Please keep this day free and plan now to make up table parties. Our December Newsletter will include additional information.

## A FALL FROM GRACE—OR MEETING GRAVITY

At the age of 80 years, is there anything more hurtful to pride than being catapulted into the air and landing on your face? Gravity—it is an unbeatable opponent.

I was walking along Sackville Street admiring the trees when suddenly I felt my shoe catch on a raised ledge of a concrete square, bringing me to a dead halt; next I was flying through the air, then crash on to the left side of my face. I did not have time to protect my face with my hands, so my forehead received the full force of hard Mother Earth. I was helpless. I could feel my face skidding along the path as if the skin was being grated off. I had a brief image of myself as if I was the outside observer—I saw my face turned to the right and my body lying hunched up. I struggled to my feet, feeling a bit peculiar. I looked to see if I had laddered my pantihose: I had not. I thought, that is a plus. I felt my face; there was slight bleeding, but the swelling was commencing. I walked home as fast as I could to apply an ice pack to my face.

Weeks later the technicolour painting is still continuing—red, purple, blue, black, and now a dash of grey and yellow. The only thing I can do is to colour-coordinate my clothes with my face—what fun! I will start a new fashion. I give thanks for my genetic background, as my bones do not break easily.

What can I learn from this happening?

- \* I must keep my mind centred on the here and now, and not day-dream.
- \* I must be in the presence of the moment.
- \* I must not scuff my feet: lift, lift, lift, lift your feet, Mother Brown.
- \* I must look ahead for obstacles on the path, such as raised pavement ledges, sticks, or liquidamber pods.
- \* I should not have arms clasped behind my back, but stand up straight, with head up.
- \* I need to walk at a more leisurely pace.

In sharing this learning experience, I am aware that as I age, I trip more easily; my balance mechanism is not as efficient, but one can seek and find preventative measures.

I can always learn something from an event, so it is not wasted. Life always offers learning experiences; age is one of them, so enjoy it, but never say 'It won't happen to me'.

One of the great gifts I was given on this occasion was the love and caring expressed by my friends.

*Alexe Gale*

## **SOCIAL FORUMS**

Social Forums have been conducted by U3A-Hawthorn for several years in an endeavour to bring members together to hear speakers of general interest. This has been seen as important, as our classes are scattered throughout Hawthorn and district, in numerous venues, and members are not often able to interact as a whole. The Forums have also provided the opportunity for us all to hear addresses from some most notable Australians and to put questions to them.

The most suitable venue, where everyone can see and hear, has proved to be the Swinburne lecture theatre BA 201, which is only available to us during student vacations.

Recently the U3A Executive Committee has formed a new sub-committee to plan these activities, and your suggestions and comments would be welcomed. Please forward these to the Office marked 'Forum Sub-committee'.

## **SHARING OF TUTOR TALENTS**

U3A-Lilydale, a new campus formed but six months ago, is anxious to extend its range of course subjects for their small but growing membership. They have asked that we put forward to any of our interested tutors the proposition of possibly sharing your talents with their group. If any tutors are so interested, please contact Lorna Carey, Class Co-ordinator, on telephone 728 6962.

## **HAWTHORN COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROJECT and U3A—HAWTHORN**

In November 1984 the Hawthorn Community Education Project (HCEP) scheduled a public meeting. The purpose was clear, the outcome was to be a surprise. The organising committee's far-sighted vision was of education as a life-long pursuit, needing sponsorship and support to become a reality. The overwhelming enthusiasm displayed by the older members of the community who attended showed the concept of forming a U3A in Hawthorn to be both relevant and realistic. The Library meeting room was full, with standing room only. HCEP is proud of its role in the early development of the U3A, which has since justified the optimism shown in holding that meeting almost ten years ago. The U3A concept is now widely accepted and it is a force to be reckoned with in community education.

Since that time, an harmonious relationship between U3A-Hawthorn and HCEP has flourished, with U3A continuing to grow in numbers each year. HCEP has been able to provide a stable and secure framework in which this has been possible, while encouraging the self-help philosophy behind its original vision for older learners.

The use of 24 Wakefield Street was negotiated between HCEP and Swinburne in 1984 and by 1987 a formal agreement of Swinburne's sponsorship was drawn up and duly signed. The benefits of this agreement flow on to U3A, as it also enables the use of Swinburne lecture theatres and Library Special Borrowers' Rights for U3A tutors, etc. HCEP has always maintained a close association with local government, so a Council and a Swinburne representative both sit on the HCEP Management Committee.

There is a rich blend of paid HCEP workers and highly skilled and talented voluntary staff, in administration or tutoring, to be seen on duty every day at the Community Education Centre. The paid staff are always on hand to help any members of the Centre community, or simply to provide an inviting, friendly ambience. The HCEP staff specialise in providing for the needs of less mobile and disabled people, housebound and isolated older folk, who often require individual help to take part in adult education and the other community activities which we take for granted. Because of HCEP's provision, many less mobile people are able to remain part of their community while still enjoying their love of education.

As HCEP Co-ordinator, it has been my task to facilitate in any way necessary the work of U3A-Hawthorn and to promote its welfare in adult, community and further education, government and public arenas. I am also an ex-officio member of the U3A Executive Committee and sub-committee on Social Forums. It is a privilege to work so closely with U3A members on a daily basis and to be able to learn so much from them.

HCEP and U3A have come a long way together since that first meeting, and the strength of our

combined activities has shown the value of our working relationship.

*Judith Elsworth*

From Rae Alexander (Creative Writing and Literature):

Alicja Paciej (Alla) is a member of the Friday *Creative Writing and Literature* group. She is Polish-born and came to the group with an interest in developing her knowledge of the English language. The following is her first contribution in writing.

### **MY FEELING ABOUT THE GROUP MEETINGS**

It is cold. The wind is blowing. Rain is falling. I am standing at the tram stop. I am alone, but a few moments ago I was surrounded by warmth and joy. Among people and books one does not experience loneliness or even alienation.

So what if not every word is exactly understood? So what if I am the only Polish person there?

I arrive and wait. At first I am met by a smile and kind words. Then more smiles and things get warmer.

Our teacher leads us into the world of thought and feelings. The strophes we read really come from depths which have been set down mysteriously for oneself or for posterity.

Just as Jan Kochanowski (a sixteenth-century Polish poet) lamented the loss of his little daughter in his 'Treny' (dirge), seeing her in every object she had touched, so other poets and writers, regardless of time, worship the children and loved ones and the world around them. Dream and reality are meshed in the beautiful strophe and awake mixed feelings in the heart. Sometimes when I listen to this, everything resounds like music in me.

I get home. I return to the strophe we have read. I rediscover the thoughts. I see the people. The images of the poetry combine with the people present. Across from me sits B— with her melancholy smile. She has something of Polish character about her. Next to her sits J—, who is so merry. Farther back sits very English D—. M— is rather sad, and her writings are carefully worded out. Like those of majority of the participants, her writing speaks of her loneliness and of something lost.

Everyone uses beautiful language. I mostly keep quiet for it is forbidden to kill beauty. Sometimes I have to say something—at a moment I feel like a murderer. I prefer to listen, but with silence I am unable to express what is in my heart and how important these meetings are to me.

*Alicja Paciej*

### **LIVING AND DYING COURSE, U3A–Hawthorn**

You may ask why we should waste our energy considering this topic. We all know what living is about, so don't let us talk about dying—later on will do.

The Western way, especially in this century, has been to deny death as far as it is possible. Those who are terminally ill are placed in the hands of the medical profession and institutions. The funeral directors protect the mourners by making everything as smooth as feasible and the body as life-like as possible.

Life and death are irretrievably one. You cannot know one without experiencing the other. We need to become 'consumer friendly' with death. Death can be seen as a transition from one state of 'being' to another; the Dalai Lama states it is as easy as changing one's coat for another. We forget we experience other ways of being in sleep, dreaming and meditation. Fear of death is part of our human consciousness, the fear of the unknown, the loss of the familiar and all that means.

If you face your own mortality, you are better able to help those who are mourning the loss of a loved one. There are specialised groups in our community who support the grieving person (e.g. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), but many in the community do not fit into this group. This is why I feel groups need to be set up in the community where people can meet, ask questions and discuss their needs.

Where better than through U3A? The Living and Dying group, U3A–Hawthorn, uses the Kubler-Ross book, *Death, the Final Stage of Growth*.

I chose this book as it includes the rituals for death in other cultures. In the Hawthorn group there are eight to twelve participants and we meet once each week. From the study of the book, questions arise such as

- I don't know what to say to my friend who has just lost a 21-year-old daughter?
- How can funeral rituals be used in the healing process of grieving?
- What is the value of being an active participant in this ritual?
- What effect does it have on a child to be taken to a funeral?
- Do they view the body and say goodbye?

Other considerations include the value of a family meeting to discuss a person's wishes concerning the distribution of property and goods, the type of service wanted, and thoughts on the use of life-support systems; palliative care has brought more choices for the care of the permanently ill to our community.

The aim of the course is to enable more members to express their feelings and views about death, their experiences with a dying friend or grieving family, to ask questions and exchange points of view on subjects not normally discussed in the community. For this, one needs a supportive group.

Death and Life can be seen as a continuum, a process which expresses our humanness as we are mortal beings. As we live so will we die; the quality of our life will be reflected in the manner in which we meet this transition to universal oneness.

*Alexe Gale*

## **VOLUNTEER STAFF IN THE OFFICE**

The volunteer staff who work in the office are the liaison between the public and the U3A organisation, and between members and tutors and general administration. Usually they work half a day each fortnight, though some work weekly. The work involves answering the telephone, answering or passing on mail, issuing receipts, folding newsletters, etc. With over 600 members and some 60 courses in progress run by 58 tutors, a friendly and competent office staff plays an important role in our large organisation. **AND WE LOVE VOLUNTEERS!**

## **CURRENT AFFAIRS: AUSTRALIA AND THE WORLD**

The Current Affairs group has been running continuously for close on nine years and during this time has met every Thursday, with few exceptions, for two hours of discussion on the Current Affairs of the world and generally to put the world to rights.

The system on which we run has evolved over the years. Meetings start with the Convenor reading selected articles from the media; members are free to comment and give their views, favourable or unfavourable, on the articles, so a lively debate takes place.

After about one hour members are free to raise any other subjects they consider of interest or importance; in this way all members can be drawn into a general discussion. Use has also been made of video presentations. A particularly interesting subject dealt with in this way was the break-up of Yugoslavia and the subsequent long-drawn-out war.

Members are encouraged to take the chair, so as to extend their experience and to ensure that, in the event of the Convenor's being absent, the group will still meet.

When possible we invite outside speakers on subjects of special interest, as for example a fascinating and informative talk given by a 'Lady Counsellor/Educator who worked with sex offenders in Pentridge and at the Prostitutes' Collective in St Kilda, with victims of child abuse, and counselling on drug and alcohol abuse'.

Another talk was given by an investigative journalist who had been with the BBC and was visiting Australia. We also had a retired member of the Fire Brigade who specialised in advising on safety measures in the home; this latter was best described as a life-saving exercise. (As a result of this, a similar talk was given to the last Social Forum.) All the talks were so interesting and informative that no-one left the meeting at the normal closing time, but stayed a further ten to fifteen minutes. Over the years, the Current Affairs group has flourished and can truly be described as a happy, friendly and keen group, and great debaters.

*Wolfe Flack*

## **EDITOR OF NEWSLETTER**

The Executive Committee of the Hawthorn U3A wish to take this opportunity to express our thanks and great appreciation to Alma Bourke, who almost single-handedly has produced our Newsletter for many years. Alma brought out the June edition, but that was her last, and we cannot let this occasion pass without thanking her once again for her tireless efforts and her outstanding organising ability. Enjoy your leisure. Alma, when your copy of this September issue arrives in the post.

## **INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP FEES**

Membership fees will increase by \$5.00 per member per annum commencing with 1995. The new fee scale will be \$25.00 for individuals, with concessional rate of \$40.00 for couples or for two members residing at the same address.

The decision by your Executive Committee to increase fees has been taken with reluctance, but such a course is necessary to maintain the Campus finances in a healthy state.

## **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES GROUP**

Convener Shirley Ramsay

The Mid-winter Christmas Lunch, held in July, was a great success and will be repeated next year.

Final activities for this year will be:

\* Wednesday, 28th September, 1994, a visit to the Observation Deck at the Rialto, followed by the Casino, with opportunity to have lunch at either place.

\* Friday, 9th December, a wind-up Christmas Lunch (by popular request) at the Radisson President Hotel.

Members of the Social Activities Group will be notified individually, but other U3A members and friends are most welcome to join in.

Watch the Notice Board for further details.

## **SHORT COURSES**

The Executive Committee wish to add a number of short courses to our curriculum, but need further resources to bring this about. We are seeking from among our members someone with the interest and drive to conceive and bring into effect appropriate subjects and the tutor resource, leading to implementing the courses to fulfill this aim of the Committee.

## **EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST—SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMMES**

### **A) ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

The Summer School will be run in conjunction with the newly formed Lilydale U3A. Those interested in attending are requested to **REGISTER THEIR INTEREST** by ringing the office (818 7371) or writing their name on the list on the desk at 24 Wakefield Street. This is to assist us in making arrangements. Further information and registration details will be in the December newsletter.

Environmental Issues will cover two days at Swinburne in the week commencing 30 January, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. plus a one-day field trip. Professor Peter Fensham, former Dean of Science Education, Monash University, will run a workshop-style programme. The topics will include air quality, ozone depletion, energy conservation (domestic and industrial), endangered species. Convenors: Jean Giese (Hawthorn), Marina ? (Lilydale).

### **B) CONSTITUTIONAL STUDIES**

This could also be run in conjunction with the Lilydale group.

### **C) COMPUTER COURSES**

These could be arranged at Swinburne on a fee-paying basis (\$30-40).

## U3A HAWTHORN COURSE ADMINISTRATION

The computerized Membership / Course enrolment application system, which is suitable to run on MacIntosh and IBM PC's with FilemakerPro software installed, is now fully developed and functional and will also be installed on the 'University of the Third Age, Waverley' computer in their new location at Chadstone.

We are prepared to demonstrate and assist in setting up this system to computer literate staff of other campuses planning to computerize their records.

What this system can do for you our tutors, students and office staff.

For tutors and convenors the system can semi-automatically:

1. Produce letters, lists and notices:
  - 1.1 'Tutor Questionnaire' letter, asking tutors' details for forthcoming courses.  
Please forward your response by the due date.  
Tutors planning future courses should consider:  
We prefer 1st semester classes to commence in the last full week in February and all 2nd semester activities should be completed by the end of the 1st full week in December.  
Rooms in Council libraries are not available during school holiday periods.  
There will be no classes on gazetted public holidays.  
No classes / activities shall be conducted on Tuesday 14th March, 1995 (see page 1)
  - 1.2 'Tutor Confirmation' letter, advising and confirming all course details.  
Please advise if you do not agree with the details in this letter.
  - 1.3 'Class enrolment / attendance' lists prior to start of course and at start of 2nd semester.  
Please keep up the attendance records and return sheets after each semester or when course completed.
  - 1.4 'Withdrawal / waiting list' notices.  
These will be issued to tutors with full and over-enrolled classes only. Please complete and return to the office each month.
2. Maintain the database with tutors' responses to 1.1 above.

For students:

1. Produce letters:
  - 1.1 Advising that they have been accepted in courses.
  - 1.2 Advising members that they have been placed on waiting list for courses.
  - 1.3 Advising that they are not acceptable due to tutor's pre-requisites.  
Members shall not join classes / activities until they are financial and have been accepted by letter or verbally advised by one of the course administration staff.

For the office and course administration staff:

1. Produce lists, charts and labels:
  - 1.1 Course enrolment lists with member's status details: Accepted, Waiting list, Not-acceptable and Withdrawals.
  - 1.2 Wallcharts for courses current in 1st and 2nd semesters.
  - 1.3 Wallcharts for venue utilisation in 1st and 2nd semesters.
  - 1.4 Mailing labels, which can be selected as required for: Notices to Tutors, Minutes of Executive Committee meeting to Committee Members, Newsletters to all members, tutors, other campuses and organisations.
2. Show on the computer screen the recommended office administration procedures.
3. Produce inserts for name badges.

*Hans van Dorssen*