



NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 3

October 2019

A few words from our president...



Term 4 is underway, and we have a packed program.

Those attending sessions at the Railway Station will

do so in much greater comfort now that we have the new chairs. I would like to thank John Meyer for his tenacity in securing better seating for us. I would also like to thank Brett Dieren and Indigo Shire Council for 'realising the dream'. And I would like to thank you, the members, for your patience. We did change the original specs, which resulted in an extended delay ... but finally we're there!

We have been awarded grants by Indigo Shire Council. In May we received \$5,000 under the Active Indigo Grant program for '**Indigo U3A Gets Active!**', and more recently \$1500 under the Shire's Community Grants for our '**Hear Me**' project.

Indigo Gets Active! will provide a range of new health and fitness

related initiatives for Indigo U3A members including a 'Building Skills with Devices' course focusing on health and wellbeing apps and programs; and the Bike Riding Group. It is anticipated that these will lead to the introduction of other activity-based courses.

The '**Hear Me**' project will see the introduction of equipment aimed at improving the auditory environment at the Railway Station. We will have the equipment up and running as soon as possible.

Frances Baker and I attended a meeting of North East Victorian Regional U3As in Seymour organised by U3A Network Victoria. Seven NE regional U3As were represented and it was a valuable opportunity to network with other U3As to know what programs they are running, and to discuss the common challenges we each experience. Indigo U3A will host the next meeting, which will be held in Beechworth on Tuesday 21

April 2020. Please note the date in your calendar. We will have more information for you later in the year.

Rosemary Ryan
President

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Indigo U3A supports Seniors Festival 2019...



On Thursday, **24 October** Indigo U3A will host a '**not to be missed**' event focusing on '**Ageing Well**'

during the 2019 Seniors Festival.

Speakers Dr. Kathleen Brasher, a researcher, family facilitator and social innovator, and Kate O'Toole, the Ageing Well Officer at Indigo Shire Council, will speak on the theme of positive ageing and the challenges involved looking ahead.

Kathleen has extensive knowledge on what matters to older people in rural communities and is heavily invested in building a collaborative approach to building an 'age-friendly' North East Victoria.

Kate, who has been in her role at Indigo Shire Council for more than six months, will be offering her reflections in this new role as well as discussing the challenges we all face 'looking ahead' but also the reasons we have to should celebrate living in the Indigo Shire.

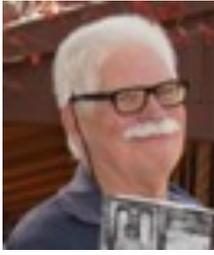
The event will be held from 2pm to 4pm, at the Old Beechworth Railway Station in Harper Avenue. There is no cost involved but those interested in attending will need to register at:

courses.indigo.u3a@gmail.com or call: 0431 834 309.

U3A Members should enrol through the Indigo U3A website, www.indigou3a.net.



A quiet life in the country!!—Testimonial



When Michael and Maureen O'Flaherty relocated from Melbourne to Beechworth in 2016 they were

no strangers to the town.

The couple had been visiting Beechworth for many years and, like most people, were delighted by its natural beauty, wonderful historical ambiance and the promise of a gentler pace of life.

Having both been active members of Boroondara U3A for many years,

one of the first things they did after they had settled into their new home was to find out whether Beechworth had its own U3A group.

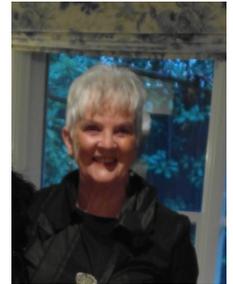
They were delighted to see an article on Indigo U3A in the local paper and made contact straight away. Michael said, "I was particularly interested in joining the Conversations group with Michael Evans because it sounded interesting and informative and I thought I would meet like-minded people there. And I certainly did".

Almost four years on and both Michael and Maureen are active members of Indigo U3A taking part

in a variety of activities and helping organise others. Both commented on the warm welcome they had received and the friendships they had made since they joined.

"We felt at home straight away", Michael said. "Through the activities we have joined and the social events we have attended we are busier than ever.

So much for a quiet life in the country!"



Christmas Function...

...SAVE THE DATE...

ON: Wednesday 11 December,
FROM: 5.30pm-9pm

AT: Stanley Primary School

COST: \$30 per head: includes main course, fruit salad and Christmas cake, soft drinks and alcoholic beverages.

So we can be environmentally friendly AND allow everyone to enjoy the evening (no volunteers to wash up).....

...BRING: your own plate, bowl, glass and cutlery. AND some pre-dinner nibbles to share please.

PLEASE: RSVP and pay by Wednesday 4 December



For full details go to View Courses on the member log In page of the website.

Term 3 wrap up...



The Games Group continued playing Backgammon; and Mahjong was added to the mix with Myki Francki giving a helping hand to novice players. There's also room for more board games if you have a favourite you would like to bring along.

In International Relations Gerry Engwerda continued to keep us informed on matters past and present. His topics for Term 3 were 'Iran vs the US in the Persian Gulf'; 'Australia from the Gold Rush to WWI', and 'Life in the 21st Century'.

Michael Evans has signed off on **Conversations** until 2020, with the final set of topics being: Irrationality, Hysteria, Rights, Indigenous, Other.

The Men's Book Group discussed the following reading list this year :

- 'A Long Way from Home' by Peter Carey.

- '1788' by Watkin Tench ed. by Tim Flannery.
- 'Milkman' by Anna Burns.
- A biography of Elizabeth MacArthur by Michelle Scott Tucker.
- John Carroll's 'Wreck of Western Civilization'.

Tastes has had a bit of a wobble this year with a couple of events having to be cancelled. Despite this we enjoyed a terrific Pies and Footy event in September at Maureen and Michael's home. Approximately twenty of us arrived bringing various pastry dishes and our footy scarves.



An excellent time had by all.

The Bike Riding Group and the 4th Thursday Walks continue to enjoy their discovery of the wonderful areas within close proximity to Beechworth.

Poets and Drama have engaged the creative spirit, while Garth has sorted out those with technology challenges in his **Tech Savvy Seniors**

Energy—Exciting possibilities ahead...

Heather Meyer



In Term 3, our group explored the essentials of energy and energy transformations and looked at the positive aspects of moving away

from fossil fuels and at the same time embracing developing technologies associated with electricity and transport. Many ideas generated lively discussion. Thanks to all participants. Here is a summary of our findings.

Humans have always used energy from other living things. Our food and fibre derive from organic sources. In recent centuries, we have begun to rely more heavily on the use of organic energy in the form of fossil fuels, material from decomposing living things deposited millions of years ago.

Our dependency on these fuels needs to decrease and cease due to the greenhouse gases this creates which are affecting the atmosphere. We need to move to using the abundant energy available in the inorganic system.

Rather than being a burden, this provides exciting opportunities as the development of alternative means of capturing, storing and distributing electricity has been dramatic, diverse and is continuing at a rapid rate. Electricity will become an even more important energy form in the future. Helping in this reform are new digital technologies. It is possible to use energy derived from inorganic sources (solar, wind, waves, etc) for electricity generation, 100% worldwide. Australia, with huge potential solar and wind energy, is extremely well placed in this new economy.

Likewise developments in the field of transport have been rapid and away from fossil fuel driven internal combustion engines. Development is strong in China and Scandinavia but Australia in most part is lagging behind but, like the transition to mobile phones, conversion is likely to be very rapid. Combined with technology for autonomous vehicles it is likely that cars will become not a personal commodity but morph into a service industry especially in urban areas. Such a change is also likely to be rapid.

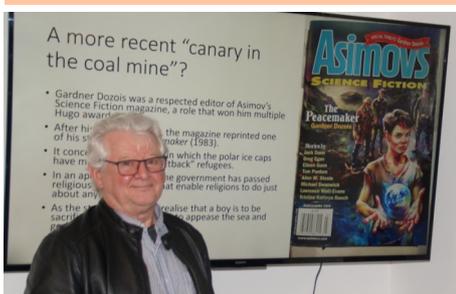
How many will drive to U3A in an electric vehicle powered by renewable energy in five years' time?

Who will be the first to arrive in an autonomous vehicle? What a wonderful boon self-driving vehicles will be for seniors!

By Heather Meyer

Science Fiction...

Michael Evans & Harvey Anderssen



Michael Evans started by asking.. 'What is Science Fiction?' ... Perhaps stories of space or of time, of imaginary technology; alternative history; or dystopian fiction.

After considering his 80 Power Point slides, each posing a new set of thought-provoking questions, participants came away with a much richer understanding of this complex and changing genre of literature and film.

The slides also depicted wondrous amazing images, suggestive of the genre's characteristic of taking a novel idea, situation or gadget (a "novum") and spinning a story around the implications. We

learned that fantasy, a sub-genre, does likewise with magic as the "novum".

We investigated many dimensions of the genre. We heard Sturgeon's response to criticisms that 90% of SF was crap: "SF conforms to the same trends of quality as all other art forms." We heard how the genre "dances with culture" and evolves with science.

We traced the history of the genre from its origins in mythology, finding elements in the dialogues of Plato, Cicero's *Republic*, Lucian's *A True Story*, and Giordano Bruno's heresy. We passed by *Gullivers Travels* and Voltaire's *Micromegas* to Frankenstein, Jules Verne and H G Wells. Then on to the Golden Age (1940-1960) with Arthur C Clarke, Lester del Ray, Clifford Simak and Isaac Asimov. Then the New Age, with the focus shifting from technology and challenge to surrealism and social complexities.

Examples are *The Matrix*, *Dune*, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, and *Dangerous Visions*.

We saw women authors become prominent with Ursula Le Guin, and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and recent Nebula and Hugo award winners Ann Leckie and NK Jemisin. We discovered it was a very popular genre in countries like China, "perhaps because it can say things that can't be said in contemporary fiction."

"Where is Science Fiction today?" asked the last slide, featuring an image of the poster for next year's World Science Fiction Convention in New Zealand. The answer in part: "Postmodern ideas seem to have dissolved the once clear distinction between high and low culture. Science Fiction has escaped its genre ghetto. Its tropes have now permeated culture at many levels. It is thriving in movies, television, and video games." Harvey Anderssen

Term 4—New courses and “one-off” presentations...

A Dirty Course...

for the Home Gardener 30 October, 2pm-3.30pm

Come along and find out how to get your hands dirty in your own awesome soil! This is a new, informative, interesting talk on soil management for all home gardeners

Local horticulturalist Annet Smits, will engage us with information on how to prepare the soil in our gardens in order to obtain wonderful results for both flowers and veggies.

Bring all your gardening questions and Annet will be only too happy to assist you.

This talk and question/answer session will be followed by a discussion regarding the formation of an indigo U3A gardening group.

The Sixth Extinction...

Have we entered a new geological era?

Anthropocene!

Heather Meyer



Come along and join in these three discussion and discovery sessions on **Thursday afternoons, 31 October, 7 and 14 November from 2pm-4pm.**

We have all read of decline of polar bears, loss of koalas, and the destruction in the Amazon. The news is full of these forebodings. But why is this important? What effect does this have on humans beyond not having cute and cuddly animals and beautiful scenery?

What is the science behind humans and their relationship with other

living things?

What do we know about other times on Earth when large numbers of plants and animals disappeared? What caused previous events? What is causing rapid change now? Can we change the scale of these losses?

What can/is being done?

As Australians we have been proud of our unique flora and fauna, but our environment is also under stress. What is occurring locally to help and hinder conservation measures?

Check the calendar entry on the website at www.indigou3a.net for details.



Be Connected...



A joint Quercus—Indigo U3A learning activity.

The next 'Be Connected' weekly series will begin on **Wednesday 30 October** with the first session being held at Quercus from 1.30pm-3.30pm.

Following sessions will be held at U3A through until **Wednesday 4 December**. These sessions are invaluable for anyone who is struggling to come to grips with the internet on their smart phone, tablet or PC. Volunteer 'digital mentors' give free training and support.

Psychology—the Quest for Understanding...



On **Thursday 5 December**, this one session event is a pre-view of a 10-week course to be offered by

Indigo U3A in Term 1, 2020.

The course is for people who want to learn about and discuss the broad issues, ideas, research etc into human behaviour and perception. It is not a personal self-help course

The tutor, Judi Moncur, who has recently retired and moved to Beechworth, has a degree in

Psychology, History and English Literature, from the University of Melbourne.

She has taught HS senior level Psychology for 25 years, both in the ACT and in the UK. In the ACT she was involved in writing, revising and evaluating psychology courses and course content. She also taught adult groups in England for a year.

Judi will give participants a more rounded idea of the content of the 2020 course by introducing some of the topics, which will be covered in the full length course. (E.g: memory, perception and psychological research)

What's On—A Final Word

Our other popular courses continue, so please make sure you keep up to date by reading the weekly What's On email.

Sometimes the program does change, and sometimes human error creeps into the What's On .. so please make sure you also check the calendar on the website.

U3A Member Survey 2019—what you told us....

Thank you to all who participated in the survey. The information from both this year and the 2018 survey gives us valuable building blocks on which to base our future direction in relation to courses and other activities. You responded with some excellent suggestions, and these have been passed to our hardworking Program Planning Group.

Your fellow members' interests, skills and experience...

Professional careers dominated and previous experience and skills include administration, health care, legal work, research, banking, agriculture, teaching and corporate management.

Interests are diverse, including travel, family, art, literature, philosophy, reading, history, food and wine, science, politics, international relations, fitness and well-being, ethics, walking, games, ecology, gardening, music, crafts, and the natural environment.

If you like statistics, here are a few to contemplate...

83% of you are between the age of 65 and 79 yrs

61% live within a 2km radius of the Old Beechworth Railway Station and 30% live more than 5km away.

60% live with another person, ie partner, spouse or friend

62% have a pet, with dogs being the most popular at 80%.

14% noted a hearing disability, and 8% sitting problems.

Suggestions for overall improvement included ...

- Programs over summer as well as winter/ outside 'term times'
- More active participation in sessions rather than just listening
- More links from program reminders to course content on the website
- More "single session" speakers
- Trips to other neighbouring areas including for performances, food and wine
- Encouragement for members to share their knowledge/past life
- Visiting gardens
- Attending musical events
- Encouraging new members to join

Your information ensures we are better informed when discussing members' needs with external agencies.

Finally, U3A programs require a dedicated body of volunteers to develop, design and conduct programs, to find speakers, to liaise with other groups, to negotiate with council and other agencies and, critically, to secure funding. Your help volunteering is always appreciated.

Your U3A website ...

Information about Indigo U3A and the courses and activities available to members will be found on your website at www.indigou3a.net.

Please visit the website regularly to check for updates and offerings, and enrol to attend any of the courses and activities. You will need your Indigo U3A member number and password.

Please contact us if you need help.



Indigo U3A

Committee of Management

President: Rosemary Ryan

Vice-President: Michael Bydder

Secretary: Frances Baker

Treasurer: Richard Maskiell

Member representatives: Harvey Anderssen, Michael Evans, Jan Milhinch and Maureen O'Flaherty.

Program Planning Group

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Summer School

Maureen O'Flaherty and the Program Planning Group are working on producing a terrific summer school program.

We are planning for enough variety to provide something for everyone to really enjoy.



Phil Bunn's Corner....

Vive Le Vello

As a small boy, I rode a tricycle

Then in my youth, I rode a bicycle

Now I'm elderly with tastes eclectic

And still I ride a bike, but its electric.