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The Pines Learning & Activity Centre, 2/520 Blackburn Road, Doncaster East 3109; PO Box 3288, The Pines, Doncaster East, 3109; Tel: 9894 5955; [manunipines@gmail.com](mailto:manunipines@gmail.com) ; [www.u3amanningham.org.au](http://www.u3amanningham.org.au)

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## President's Report

### Thank You

Two functions have been held recently to thank our hardworking class reps and office workers for their efforts during the year. Also, thank you very much to **Margaret Salomon** and her Special Events Team for organizing our participation in the Seniors' Festival at Fed Square on 6 October. I believe our participants excelled in their respective demonstrations.

### Doncare Donations

Doncare and I thank very much all the members who contributed to the food bank appeal. Four car-boot loads of goods were transported to Doncare and they were very appreciative of your generosity.

### New Constitution

**Alita Mossop** and **Graeme Martin** worked very hard for six months to draft our new Constitution. At the Special General Meeting held on 19 September, U3A Manningham members voted unanimously to accept it as the new Constitution.

### New Membership Fees

The Committee of Management recently voted to change the membership fees for 2014 to \$50 (full) and \$25 (associate). The main reasons for the change, which was the first increase in sixteen years, were the increased operating costs for hire of external accommodation and the very high increase for utilities at The Pines building.

### Minimum Membership Age

The membership policy for U3A Manningham has been amended to show a minimum age (55 years and above) for new members commencing with the 2014 enrolment. This action was taken to try and ensure people in the 'third age' of their lives have an opportunity to become involved in our organisation following their retirement from full-time employment. The Manningham City population of those aged 65+ will increase by 9000 by 2021 (ABS statistics) and the implementation of the above change is a step towards controlling our membership growth.

### Summer School 2014

**Ken Barker** put together a comprehensive program for participants to enjoy next January. To date, 184 people have enrolled but there are still some places available. Be quick if you want to enroll!

### 2014 Enrolment

A reminder that re-enrolment for 2014 commences 20 November (Level1) and finishes 5 December (new members). Thank you to **Geoff Sheldon**, **Milly Ching** and the Curriculum Team for the excellent program you have put together and also to **Lyn Torrens**, **John Driver** and the Enrolment Team for all the hard work they have done - and will do - during this period.

### 2013 UNIFEST

A reminder that on 29 November, our annual concert and Art and Craft display will take place, commencing at 10.45 am, followed by a BYO Luncheon.

The Committee wishes all our members a safe, happy and enjoyable break and we look forward to seeing you all again in 2014.

**Bryce Normoyle**

# Celebration Day 2013



Victorian Seniors' Week opened at Federation Square on Sunday, 6 October. U3A Manningham participated with twenty other Victorian U3As and fifty other senior-related groups. The displays were complemented by strolling accordionists and performances on the main stage.

This year, our three marquees were located on the Riverside Terrace and eight of our members demonstrated their arts throughout the day. Visitors could see examples of calligraphy, sculpture, handcrafts, watercolour, woodcarving and a didgeridoo performance. On the lawn area, our Line Dancing Group's performance was a show stopper. Along the riverside, our petanque players displayed wonderful enthusiasm to match their talents.

Additional images of the day are on our website ([www.u3amanningham.org.au](http://www.u3amanningham.org.au)).



We have received accolades from other groups over the years about the quality of our presentations at this event. Acknowledgment and thanks go to our demonstrators and to the organisers who set such a high standard. The following members were responsible for making our Celebration Day participation so successful this year: **Carmen Woodward, Laurie Bicknell, Sandra Dean, Jane Lithoxopoulos, Lucia Di Fiore, Gwenda Edmonds, Elizabeth Wilks, Frank O'Neill**, the **Petanque Team** and our **Line Dancing Group**. Behind the scene (and usually unseen) were those important people who give support in many ways: **Wendy Donovan, Ron McQuade, Warren Tromph and Graeme Martin**. Congratulations to everyone for another outstanding example of the creative talents at our U3A!

Margaret Salomon

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## Curriculum News

Another year draws to a close and classes will soon be making plans for their end-of-year celebrations. Deep down in the 'engine room' of U3A Manningham, work is gathering pace for preparations for next year. The 2014 Courses brochure will soon be winging its way to all current members. We hope that everybody will sign up for another year of mind-stretching learning and body-toning activities. There will certainly be no shortage of choice: the 2014 brochure has expanded from 24 to 28 pages and lists around 190 classes. It is anticipated that about 1800 members will enrol for next year. There are a number of interesting new courses for 2014 so maybe, now's the time to consider taking up something completely new and daringly out of character.

As always, there are departures and arrivals to announce. Next year will see a change of personnel in the role of Coordinator of Class Reps and Deputies. **Frances Keogh** will be stepping down from this position to be replaced by **Bridget Halge**. Frances has successfully done this important job for the last three years. She tells me she has found considerable satisfaction in the work of liaising with Tutors and Class Reps and all the other associated tasks that ensure the smooth running of this aspect of U3AM's work. Frances has recently relocated out of the area and she feels it would be difficult to try to travel to our U3A and still give the commitment the work requires. We take this opportunity to thank her for her selfless contribution and hard work and hope that she will fully enjoy the extra leisure time that this 'release' brings.

One last thought: the other day, I came across a news item about a new craze in England. It's called chess-boxing and combines three minutes of speed chess with three minutes of boxing. Participants proceed from one activity to the other until one is defeated either on the chess board or on the canvas floor of the boxing ring. Any offers to introduce this class into our curriculum? What better way of encouraging a healthy mind in a healthy body. If anyone is mad enough for this, please see me!

Geoff Sheldon, Curriculum Coordinator

## Views and Reviews

*Views and Reviews* is a forum for U3AM members. Contributions on a range of topics of interest to our members are invited, with a limit of 500 words. Selection for publication will be made by the Editorial Committee. Send contributions to [dianeбайд@yahoo.com](mailto:dianeбайд@yahoo.com).

In this issue, we include two articles. One discusses scientific evidence about the things older people should do to ensure a healthy ageing process. The second one is a personal reflection on the importance of choosing a range of activities to keep our bodies and minds fit. Guess what? They are very similar!

### ‘Changing your Mind about Dementia’

By Georgina O’Keefe

Dementia is a topic of huge interest to many U3A members concerned about their inability to recall a name or to remember whether they locked the back door before they left home. Luckily, we have the benefit of recent Australian research to provide excellent information about dementia and brain functioning.

Dr Michael Valenzuela, author of the popular book, *Maintain Your Brain*, is a leading Australian expert on how complex mental activity affects ageing and the onset of dementia. He has won the prestigious Eureka prize for Medical Research and leads the University of NSW Regenerative Neuroscience Group. As Senior Research Fellow in the School of Psychiatry, his research is aimed at understanding neuroplasticity and degeneration in the human brain, and how these can either lead to, or help prevent, dementia. Dr Valenzuela’s belief is that mental exercise or a ‘cognitive lifestyle’ reduces the risk of brain degeneration.

Alzheimer’s disease creates a slow process of gradual loss and shrinkage of brain cells. There is a transition stage from clear cognition to borderline cognition and the age of onset is a key factor. Many who are diagnosed with dementia in their 50s and 60s will experience a long period of degeneration. Those with a very active cognitive lifestyle will live with dementia for a shorter period. Surprisingly, about 30% of people who show pathology of dementia in their brain after death have had *no signs* of dementia during their lifetime.

In 2013, approximately 267,000 Australians are living with dementia. By 2050, there will be about 3 million! If we put in place preventative measures *now*, that figure could reduce to 2 million by 2050. Dr Valenzuela advocates for a National Dementia Prevention Plan to deal with what is an urgent health crisis. Clinical trials to date have shown that no drugs reduce dementia, although medical treatment for high blood pressure is the one big success story with a proven effect in postponing or avoiding dementia.

So, what can we do to protect ourselves? Mental, physical and social activities seem to be the three keys to maintaining a healthy brain. Activities such as dancing, yoga, Tai Chi, orienteering, gardening with a friend and intergenerational volunteering (at a school or library) are all positive steps. Combined aerobic and resistance training offer benefits for good general health. For example, dancing, which combines all the three keys to maintaining brain health, is particularly recommended. You can also challenge yourself with a diversity of mental activities: learning another language or a new game or learning to play a musical instrument. These are excellent activities to keep your mind and body active. Dr Valenzuela particularly emphasizes the importance of maintaining good social connections. You get more benefit from learning something with another person or with a group than on your own.

Using the strategies suggested by the three keys to maintaining a healthy brain, Dr Valenzuela suggests *it’s never too late to change your mind*. Dr Norman Doidge, author of *The Brain that Changes Itself* (2007), agrees and has found that the brain is flexible and capable of self-improvement. This concept -neuroplasticity - means that the brain is flexible and capable of self-improvement. Both physical and mental activities promote brain plasticity for people of all ages. The adaptability of our brain and possibilities of change, even for older people, offer an optimistic outlook.

Improvements in scientific knowledge are delivering enormous benefits. The medical message seems to be that we have to put in some work ourselves to reap the benefits of the new brain science. So get out there and get moving and studying! It’s so easy to take advantage of what U3A Manningham has to offer us. When you enrol for next year, try to sign up for something physical, something to challenge your mind and be sure to leave yourself lots of time to enjoy your friends and families.

#### Links

Two links you might want to check out are free brain training exercises (<http://www.positscience.com>) and ‘BrainyApp’, a free iPhone/iPad app designed to help individuals reduce their risk of developing dementia ([www.brainyapp.com.au](http://www.brainyapp.com.au)).

# Self-discovery and Re-invention in our Third Age

By Jane Lithoxopoulos

Some years ago, I wrote my first impressions about joining U3A Manningham and what it meant to me. At the time, I said that U3A courses challenged me intellectually, nourished my soul and kept my body strong and healthy. Now, I am discovering that U3A has given me all of the above and much more.

It has given me a path to self-discovery and reinvention: discovery of my capacities for learning, creating and aspiring; discovery that I have within me untapped energy, unexploited talents and the desire to give more than I have ever given. It has opened my mind to new possibilities; to figuring out what motivates me as a person and what it is that I am passionate about. It has given me the confidence to step out of my comfort zone to explore new ideas in the hope that they will inspire and interest others.

Among the many benefits are the social relationships you build along the way. It is great to tap into members at U3A who may be able to give you feedback, advice, information and support along your journey. As you benefit from the advice of others, you may also find that you are helping someone else along the way. Getting inspired by the members is also a great benefit. My latest inspiration comes from a 91-year-old woman who said in response to a question about 'old age': "I have always hoped to reach old age; I hope I get there."

I enjoy my 'Third Age' with U3A Manningham. I face life with a new sense of freedom, confidence and fun. I believe it is up to us to find the things that get us out of bed enthusiastically every day and I am very grateful to have found a lot of those in U3A.

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## Volunteering at U3A Manningham

Volunteering at U3A Manningham is integral to its success. Our volunteer system was established in 1996. It is designed to share the workload, to make the best use of the great variety of skills and experience our members offer and to give members a choice of how much or how little they wish to contribute, if at all. Currently, there are over 1,000 different volunteer tasks and 80% of our members help to do them.

### Benefits for members

The initial incentive to encourage members to volunteer, in addition to keeping our U3A running smoothly, was to have advantages for access into classes. Subsequent incentives are the intrinsic personal benefits of contributing to a vibrant, successful community.

The benefits of the Manningham model for members are that they can:

- find a task that suits them
- enjoy their task and usually keep it for years
- develop closer friendships by working together
- know that they won't be pestered to do more work if they volunteer for a task
- feel valued because of their contribution

Research from Curtin University in Western Australia and recent US studies support our observations when they say, "Volunteers are happier, healthier and live longer than those who don't lend a hand." They found it "helped alleviate symptoms of depression, heart disease and chronic pain while boosting social connectivity, skills and life satisfaction. Volunteering helps people find meaningful and interesting ways to improve their communities."

### Benefits for our U3A

The benefits of volunteers for our organisation are that:

- all tasks are fully supplied with volunteers
- all appointed positions (mostly administrative) are filled by matching the experience and skills of volunteers offering to help with the requirements of the task
- all appointed positions have a deputy so that absenteeism and succession are covered
- all volunteers are free to leave their task at any time without destabilising the smooth running of the organisation

We hope you continue to enjoy your participation at U3A Manningham. When you enrol for 2014, we encourage you to choose a task that suits you and gives you enough credit to enrol in the classes of your choice. Remember, the higher the level of participation, the greater the benefit - for you personally and for our U3A.

**Heather Ambrose**, Coordinator of Volunteers

## A Patchwork of Success

The quilt illustrated here is the result of group collaboration in the Patchwork and Appliqué class. The individual blocks were made by class members to provide a varied and interesting exhibit for the display cabinet in August.

It is hoped that the quilt can be used as a fund-raiser at the end of this term so that the proceeds can be donated to a local charity at Christmas.

Pat Wright, Tutor



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## Present Images to Future History

When we take 'happy snaps' of events, we want to preserve the moment. We do not always think about these recent images becoming a part of our collective history. Our U3A Manningham Digital Archive has been created to preserve these digital materials as a record of our activities.

If you have taken any images of events, functions or class activities this year that you would like to share, we would welcome copies for our Digital Archive. All files should be in jpg format and can be sent by email to the Manager of our Digital Archive, **Ann Bruce** ([annmbruce@yahoo.com](mailto:annmbruce@yahoo.com)). Also, if you are interested in working on the Digital Archive next year, please indicate this preference on your 2014 enrolment form. If you have experience working with digital images, archives, and using Excel, we would love to hear from you!

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## Books for Any Occasion



The Written Word class has successfully launched the third volume of *The Golden Quill*. The book is now available to order at the office for \$10 a copy. It would make an unusual present for a friend instead of the more traditional flowers or bottle of wine - after all, the book will last much longer! With the holidays and celebrations coming up, keep the book in mind for a special gift.

A limited number of gift packs are available containing all three volumes for \$20 or two volumes (Volume 3 plus either volumes 1 or 2) for \$15. An order book for single purchases or for book packs is on the counter at the front office or you can ring **Trish Taylor** 0402914817 or email **Lula Black** on [lula@ithaca.org.au](mailto:lula@ithaca.org.au).

Trish Taylor

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## Monthly Talks

Monthly Talks are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 3.00pm in Room 13. All are welcome - bring a friend! Entry by \$2 donation; refreshments are provided.

The last talk for this year is on 20 November and is **Health Care for the Destitute of Mumbai**. Sister Yvonne D'Souza will speak about her work with the slum dwellers on the outskirts of Mumbai. She has designed and built a world-class hospital, funded primarily by the very wealthy. It provides top medical care for the general public and reserves a dedicated number of beds cost-free for the destitute and homeless.

The first talk for 2014 will be held on 19 February and is **The Passion of Pictorial Postmarks**. Colleen Woolley will share details of her fascinating hobby researching and collecting pictorial postmarks.

Further details will be provided in class and on notice boards closer to the talk. Mark your calendars now!

Coral Vercoe

# 5Q

## Five Questions for...

### Joan Creber



**You have organized the English as a Second Language (ESL) Tutor Training program since 2004. What motivated you to get involved with ESL?**

My introduction to assisting people with English language took place while I was still employed. I was responsible for establishing a program for migrant nurses who were seeking registration as nurses in Victoria. They all had interesting stories to tell and it was encouraging to see their interest in our language and health system.

When the Migrant English Tutor program started in 2002, I did the training program for volunteer tutors of English and again, I enjoyed the engagement with migrants. People have such interesting stories to tell and language is the key to hearing them. I have been coordinating the Migrant English Volunteer Tutor Program since 2004 and teaching an English Conversation class since 2008.

**How has the need for ESL changed over the years?**

The need for English Language continues and will continue while we have migrants arriving who are not English speakers. Many of the people who come to us have learned English in school or have learned some English in the past. Some have a good knowledge of English grammar, but many have trouble expressing themselves in conversation, especially with pronunciation. When I was first involved, most of the migrants were from Italy, Greece and central Europe. Then we had mainly migrants from Asia and more recently, people from the Middle East. In Manningham, we don't see many migrants from Africa. Some of our students are recent arrivals, but some have been here for many years, but perhaps did not have the time or the opportunity to learn English earlier.

**Do you think everybody should learn a second language? Why?**

I think it would be wonderful if we all spoke at least two languages and had the opportunity to use them regularly. I learned French at school but sadly, I have lost most of it as I have not used it in years. I tried to learn Greek a few years ago and that really helped me to understand just how difficult it can be to try another language. It seems that it is easier to learn languages earlier in life so I have great empathy with our adult students. I know I would be hopeless in learning Chinese now.

**How do you relax?**

I relax by listening to classical music, reading good books and baking. I enjoy the garden, the bush, walking and being with family and friends.

**What is on your wish list for our U3A?**

That our U3A will remain a friendly, interesting and entertaining place that continues to develop new programs. I hope that one of these will be anthropology. Does anyone know a prospective teacher?!

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## A 2013 BIG Thank You

Each year, many members contribute generous amounts of time to provide courses and to help our U3A run smoothly. To recognise their participation in U3A activities, several 'Thank You' functions are held throughout the year. Even more volunteers give their time to make these events possible.

In 2013, there were more than twenty functions. For each of these, volunteers organized and supplied food, supervised and assisted with kitchen and serving activities and completed set-up and clean-up on the day.

To those U3A members, our collective thanks go to each and every one of you for participation in the varied tasks at the functions and, more importantly, for your on-going commitment to maintaining high standards for these events. By working together, the activities for each function are most enjoyable and time well spent. The result is great teamwork, great participation and great events! Again, THANK YOU to every one of the three hundred U3A members who volunteered in catering activities in 2013.

**Elaine Campbell, Lorraine Smith, John Caine, Graeme Martin**

# Office Manager's Report

We are looking forward to printing the 2014 Office Workers' Handbook in-house for the first time on our new photocopier. We will be seeking assistance from office staff to help with folding and stapling. In January, there will also be a new format for training new and near-new volunteers and some update/feedback sessions for experienced staff.



The Office Workers' afternoon tea was held on 10 October when all volunteers were thanked for their wonderful contribution to U3A Manningham. For those who couldn't make it on the day, the message of thanks is repeated below:

"On a daily basis, during school terms, you turn up for duty to carry out a number of very important tasks to help us function as efficiently and as professionally as we possibly can with such a huge staff of ever-changing volunteers. In particular, I would like to thank **Tess Gibbs** and **Ruth Jensz** for their untiring efforts organising the duty rosters for the entire year. With almost 250 members volunteering for office duty, it's a huge, time-consuming and complex task. Tess and Ruth, my grateful thanks to your team: **Vicky Curtis, Laurine Eames, Audrey Killey, Jan McAuliffe, Mike Perry, Joy Quinn, and Elizabeth Voce**, who work most efficiently behind the scenes. Thanks also to **Dawn Wright** and **Rhonda Cox**, who prepare all our name tags; to **Deirdre Meredith** for her untiring efforts in keeping our office supplies up-to-date; thanks also to **Joan Eggert** for kitchen supplies and to **Helen Norman** for her work in the Library. Not all are here today but please give them a great round of applause!

On behalf of the office staff, I also wish to thank our neighbours in the office, members of the Enrolment Team, with whom we have a great working relationship. And finally, special thanks to **Graeme Martin** and his willing team of catering helpers who, without their organization and attention to detail, we wouldn't be able to enjoy functions such as this one today."

It was indeed a most enjoyable afternoon and once again, my sincere thanks to all our office volunteers for your continued efforts.

Ruth Foxwell, Office Manager

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## Network News



### 'Ageless Learning Begins with U3A'

#### Brain Training Study for Older Adults

Research has shown that many people maintain mental fitness well into old age and can learn new skills. Software-based brain games have improved people's performance on the trained tasks, such as mental speed, attention and problem-solving. However, it is unclear if this training improves real-world activities and more research is needed. If you would like to be involved in a study and are over the age of 60, living independently and can read and understand written English you are welcome.

To find out more about how to become involved in this study, please contact **Mary Castellani** at Latrobe University ([mbcastellani@students.latrobe.edu.au](mailto:mbcastellani@students.latrobe.edu.au)) or phone 9479 5693.

#### Commissioner of Senior Victorians

The Health Minister, **David Davis**, announced in September that the First Commissioner of Senior Victorians had been appointed. He is **Gerard Mansour**. His role is to promote an age-friendly society and enhance community participation by senior Victorians. The announcement included the members of the Ministerial Advisory Committee and **Susan Webster**, U3A Network Secretary, has been appointed to this committee.

#### Publicity Release - October 2013

U3A Network Victoria is delighted to announce the award of a COTA Victoria Senior Achiever Award to the Network President **Elsie Mutton** as part of the 2013 Victorian Senior of the Year programme.

Nominated jointly by U3A Network Victoria and U3A Nunawading, Elsie was cited in her presentation as an outstanding advocate for positive ageing and described as a "lead from the front, nothing is impossible person, regularly showing that achievement and creativity don't stop at 60."

The awards were presented by the Minister for the Ageing, **David Davis**, MLC, at a ceremony at Government House. Elsie said she felt the award was recognition of the efforts of all those volunteers working in the U3A movement for the benefit of the wider seniors' community.

# Summer School 2014

There has been a lot of interest in our 2014 Summer School. However, there are a number of places still available for some courses. If you are interested, just ask at the office desk about course availability and enrolment forms.

Ken Barker, Co-ordinator

## And finally...

“Old age is not for wimps.”

Penelope Lively

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS Term 4, 2013 & Term 1, 2014

#### TERM 4, 2013

Wednesday, 20 November	Monthly Talk (Rm 13)	3.00 pm
Wednesday, 20 November	Enrolment Applications (Level 1) commence	
Wednesday, 27 November	Processing of Applications Start Supervisor Training (Rms 17/18)	
Thursday, 28 November	Level 2 Enrolment (Rms 16/17/18)	
Friday, 29 November	Level 3 Enrolment (Rms 16/17/18)	
Friday, 29 November	<b>uniFEST and End-of-Year Members Luncheon (PFR)</b>	10.30am
Friday, 29 November	<b>TERM 4 finishes</b>	
Monday, 2 December	Level 4 Enrolment (Rms 16/17/18)	
Tuesday, 3 December	Level 5 Enrolment (Rms 16/17/18)	
Wednesday, 4 December	Level 5 Enrolment continues (Rms 16/17/18)	
Thursday, 5 December	Level 6 (new members) Enrolment (Rms 16/17/18)	
Friday, 6 December	Final processing for 2013 (Rms 16/17/18)	

#### TERM 1, 2014

Monday, 3 February	<b>TERM 1 commences</b>	
Monday, 3 February	Committee of Management Meeting (Rm 8)	2.30 pm
Friday, 14 February	Newsletter deadline	
Wednesday, 19 February	Monthly Talk (Rm 13)	3.00 pm

**PFR - Pines Function Room**

## The Newsletter

Editorial team: **Diane Baird, Frances Langdon, Liew Staras**; Advisor: **Margot Roth**, Distribution: **Jeanette and Lewis Badge, John Driver, Warren Trompf**.

*Information contained in this Newsletter was correct at the time of publication. U3A Manningham makes no guarantee that the information contained in the newsletter is always accurate.*



### MISSION STATEMENT

*Our mission is to provide accessible and affordable educational, cultural, physical and social opportunities appropriate to the needs of retired and semi-retired people.*

