

# Learning for Life



Newsletter # 25

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**Address:** Strawbridge Street, BERRI SA 5343  
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Some of you may have heard that our lease of the Strawbridge Street premises, which we call "home", is in limbo. The Berri Barmera Council has advised that the building may need to be vacated if the recent building inspection deems it unsafe.

We have been aware that this might happen and our lease was renewed on an annual basis. When? Where to? We're not sure at this stage but alternative locations are being investigated by your committee.

We've been lucky to be able to house so many activities in one central location and the committee has, over the years, improved the inside of the

rooms considerably. We will definitely miss having the comfort of such an expansive space, with a kitchen, an office, a large room for the ever-growing art and yoga classes and of course our well-used and fully-stocked library. Watch this space for further news.

The guard is also changing in the art group with Daina Braddock stepping down as a tutor. Daina has generously committed 9 years to the running of the art group ... it was one of the first activities offered when U3A Riverland was formed almost 10 years ago. Meredith Dunn, whose many talents include lino printing, is also leaving to move to Adelaide. We thank both women for their dedication

to the art group. U3A members are extremely grateful to all of the tutors and facilitators who enable us to offer such a variety of activities.

Course Co-ordinator Kerry Broughton has recently advised that health issues prevent her from continuing. Thank you Kerry for your energy and enthusiasm.

We now need somebody to fill that position ... could it be you?



**EDITOR**  
Diana March



### Some of our wonderful tutors

**Standing:** Tony Guster, Daina Braddock, Bev Hartigan, Val Warren, Chris Lill, Pam Rule, Brent Morrell, Kath Morrell

**Seated:** Anne Menzel, Yvonne Iosefellis



Can we  
tempt  
you  
to  
Volunteer?

**From improving our health and happiness to promoting a sense of belonging, boosting mood and making friends, the case for volunteering keeps building.**

#### Life satisfaction

Satisfaction with life is at least partially dependent on living a life with purpose and meaning and volunteering provides both these things in spades. We feel good about ourselves when we're doing good to and for others.

#### Feel happier

People who "give" – either money or their time – have been reported to be happier and healthier than those who don't. Volunteering keeps you in a positive mood and can help lift you out of a negative mood.

*Continued on next page*

# MEET THE Committee

I was born in Berri in 1946 but spent most of my childhood, and all of my school years, on my father's soldier settler farm at Parndana, Kangaroo Island.

After leaving Parndana Area School at the end of 1962 I worked for a year in Kingscote and Parndana for Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort Ltd (the year of the two companies' amalgamation).

In 1964 I went to Adelaide to attend Wattle Park Teachers' College for two years. My first teaching appointment was Ceduna Area School in 1966 where I met my future wife, Pat.

I was called up for National Service during this year and spent 1967 and 1968 in the Army, the latter year in Vietnam for ten months. On my return I was granted study leave for 1969 and Pat and I were married at Ceduna.

In the following years I taught in various South Australian primary schools (Brompton, Crystal Brook, Caltowie and Penong) before ending up as Deputy Principal of Renmark Primary School for 23 years.

I have been eclectic in my personal development and, consequently, am interested in just about everything. However, I particularly love music in all its genres. Philosophies and ethics also interest me keenly.

Our children, Lainie and Mark were born whilst we were living at Crystal Brook and Norton Summit respectively. They have given us five grandchildren, each vastly different from the other and each greatly loved by us.

We remained in Renmark after my retirement at the end of 2005 and have kept busy with travel, grandchildren and helping in voluntary organizations.



**PRESIDENT**  
TONY GUSTER

*Not only is Tony our President, he is our "grants guru" ... he's constantly on the lookout for funding opportunities. He also facilitates the Family History group.*



**BUILDING  
MANAGER**  
GEOFF MARCH

## *In my past life I was a Physical Education teacher.*

On completing my tertiary education at Adelaide University and Adelaide Teachers' College, I was appointed to Glossop High School in 1970. Though I grew up in the city, I knew my life was destined to be in the country. After further appointments to Elizabeth Boys' Tech ... a true blackboard jungle ... and Mt Gambier High, I returned to Glossop High in 1979, retiring as Assistant Principal in 2007. Having lived in Berri for almost 40 years, I consider myself a Riverland local but I know some "true" locals might dispute that.

I spent a number of years as a Cub Leader and now volunteer as a "stonie" with the Farina Restoration Group which aims to preserve the ruins in the outback town of Farina ... definitely worth a visit

when the underground bakery is in operation (generally in June and July).

I'm passionate about gardening, photography and travel. I am an MGA enthusiast and take pride in my little red roadster. Why red? Of course it goes faster!

As a firm believer in lifelong learning, I was keen to get involved with U3A Riverland and began with the French class. Other activities I've enjoyed have included Photography, Yeast Cookery and Wine Appreciation. In all of these groups I have met people whom I'm sure I wouldn't have encountered otherwise.

I've been on the U3A Committee for the past 2 years and oversee the general management of the buildings. It will be a real shame if we have to leave the facility we now enjoy as our home base, as much time and effort has been put into improving it for our members.

### **Feel healthier**

Helping others is related to improved physical health, including weight control, lower blood pressure and relief from depression and chronic pain.

When we're helping others we're more likely to feel good about ourselves which is, not surprisingly, a positive contributor to mental health. Mental and physical health are highly correlated so when we're psychologically well, we're also more likely to be physically well.

### **Sense of belonging**

Volunteering is a great way to promote

strong social networks. Volunteering is an adventure. Meeting people from different walks of life and different ways of life brings together unexpected experiences. It gave me a sense of purpose to give back to the University community that I value so much."

### **Embrace your passions**

To get the full benefits of volunteering, the trick is to get involved in something you're passionate about. Finding the organisation or cause which engages your heart and mind, and contributing to it in ways that are meaningful to you and valuable to others, is a great gift .

### **Get a 'helpers high'**

Dr Michael Bowen, an expert on the effects of brain chemicals, says "Empathy has been shown to elevate oxytocin levels in blood plasma so it might actually be the case that oxytocin helps to promote generosity, in at least some scenarios."

This creates a "feel-good" cycle: oxytocin makes you more likely to be generous, being generous produces more oxytocin, which makes you more likely to continue being generous.

[www.sydney.edu.au](http://www.sydney.edu.au)



**SEV JOHNSON**

Not only is Sev Johnson the newly elected Secretary of the U3A Riverland Committee, she's an enthusiastic member of the art group, as well as a tutor.

When Sev first introduced us to her medium of paper collage we were all blown away by the fine detail she could coax out of strips of paper. It became very clear from the start that this was about "torn" paper, not cut paper ... no scissors allowed!

We learned that paper tears more easily with the grain (down the length of a page). Of course we all had to try the other way (horizontally) but the cross grain didn't allow for smooth tears. Initially it was hard to believe that the tiny slivers of colour in her art works were not made by brushstroke.

It is only when one sees Sev's works in full size that you appreciate the amount of detail in her art and see how the use of text actually enhances the shading and shaping of an image.

Sev's work will be featured in the upcoming SALA (SA Living Artists) exhibitions in August.



## About Me

I am a self taught collage artist who "paints with paper". Born in the Riverland, I have recently relocated back to my home town of Renmark after a 20 year absence.

I have been creating collage art since 2017, having been inspired by incredible collage art I discovered online by talented artists around the globe. I realised at the time that I had all the resources at home that I needed to give this a go (paper, glue and a surface to glue onto).

I haven't stopped since and can say with all certainty that I am addicted. To date I have had my art displayed at various venues in Tasmania and now in the Riverland. My collages are created with torn scraps of paper and glue. Scissors are not used.

My paper sources consist mainly of magazines, newspapers, catalogues, leaflets, wrapping and tissue papers, however certainly not limited to these. Scraps of paper bearing the desired images are strategically arranged and glued onto a surface (stretched canvas and canvas panels are my preferred) to create the final image.

Since my return to the Riverland I have been exploring the use of this medium to portray river and bush landscapes and other natural elements.

I have been fortunate to be given the opportunity to run collage workshops in Berri for our U3A members, a very enjoyable and satisfying experience. I will continue to exhibit my work where possible to showcase what can be achieved with paper and glue and hopefully inspire others to try it too.

# Card Café

... with Sue Drabsch



Sue has been making beautifully crafted cards for many years so it is wonderful that she is willing to share her knowledge with U3A members.

Armed with all the essential supplies including notecards, envelopes, coloured papers, stamps, glues, embossing machine, rollers, etc Sue meets with her group on a monthly basis. Even raw beginners are surprised by the quality of the cards they create each session. Feel free to contact Sue to join this group.

## You're Never Too Old for Yoga

[www.seniors.com.au](http://www.seniors.com.au)

***There is considerable research that suggests yoga, when practised correctly, can have numerous benefits for seniors. These include improved sleep habits, reducing the impact of chronic conditions, and keeping the mind sharp and the joints flexible.***

### Better sleep habits

Research has demonstrated that yoga – incorporating physical postures, breathing, and relaxation techniques – can have a positive impact on the time it takes for seniors to fall asleep and the amount of time slept.

### Improve strength & protect joints

Yoga can help improve muscle strength even if you have arthritis. One study found that both rheumatoid arthritis patients and non-arthritic adults and children experienced hand grip strength after practising yoga.”

### Control type 2 diabetes

One study found that practising yoga could help patients with type 2 diabetes. After practising yoga for 40 days, the research group of 30 to 60-year-olds with type 2 diabetes experienced a significant decline in their blood sugar levels.

### Reduce hypertension

Various studies have found that yoga can have a positive impact on hypertension. One study found that patients with mild to moderate high blood pressure experienced a decline in blood pressure after just three months of daily yoga practice. There was a corresponding drop in cholesterol, blood sugar, and triglycerides.

### Lose weight

Practising yoga has also been linked to less weight gain in older adults. Those who practise yoga weekly for at least four years have on average 1.4 kg less weight gain than the average adult aged between 53 and 57.

### Improve mood and reduce anxiety

Those that enjoy yoga practice tend to report a decline in their anxiety levels and an improvement in their mood. Research suggests that yoga might have a bigger impact on mood enhancement and anxiety reduction than other forms of exercise. The reason might be because yoga practice leads to high levels of the brain chemical GABA, which has a calming effect on the body.

### Help with chronic pain

Yoga can help with managing chronic pain. One study found that those with chronic pain were able to either improve or maintain their symptoms after just four weeks of yoga practice; with no patient reporting deterioration, whilst every patient was able to significantly reduce their pain medication dosage.

### Relieve breathing and lung issues

Yoga practice can assist with alleviating breathing and lung issues. One study found that yoga practice can improve lung capacity by as much as 10 per cent just after 40 days. Bronchial asthmatics have also been found to benefit from just 30 minutes of yoga breathing techniques.



### Bone strength

Studies show that yoga helps seniors – who are at most risk of conditions such as osteoporosis – by slowing bone thinning and reducing the risk of osteoporosis. Research has demonstrated that seniors might even gain bone rather than lose bone density with yoga practice.

### Sharpen the mind

Yoga practitioners and experts suggest that daily or weekly yoga practice can reduce stress and keep you energised, which can have a beneficial impact on the mind.

A German study published in 2005 showed that women who completed two 90-minute yoga classes a week for three months reported mental health improvements across the board. Specifically, depression scores improved by 50%, anxiety scores by 30%, and overall well-being scores by 65%.

### Flexibility without strain

Yoga is perfect for seniors who want to stay active without the strain associated with high-intensity cardio exercises and strength training. As a low-impact exercise, it helps seniors build joint flexibility and muscle strength with a lower risk of injury.



# Writing for pleasure

This group meets fortnightly to share their writings and to be challenged by writing exercises...not to mention the Readers' Digest word quizzes!

*"As we age, creative writing can stimulate our imagination and keep our minds sharp"*

## HOMELESS

He was homeless, hungry and thirsty  
He longed to be happy and fed  
Summer had been hot, dry and fiery  
He kept hoping for a comfortable bed

He knew the winter was coming  
And he wished to find somewhere to live  
He was prepared to work for his tucker  
He knew he had so much to give

His life had been brutal and harsh  
He had learned from a very young age  
To fend for himself in all ways  
And to control his inbred hot rage

He was quite young when he first met Sally  
And they'd cared for each other since then  
They shared what they found in the bins  
And became known as Sally and Ben

Before this he'd not ever had a name  
Just answered to verbal abuse  
So a name was important to him  
And Ben was a good name to use

On the day that their troubles all ended  
They were approached by a decent young man  
Who had come and sat down beside him  
And extended a friendly right hand

He asked if they'd like to come with him  
As he had a house he would like to share  
So they happily followed him to his home  
And were introduced to a lady called Claire

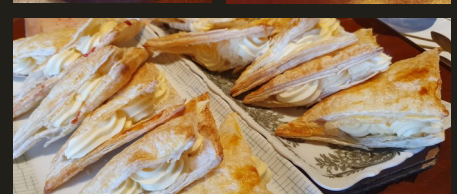
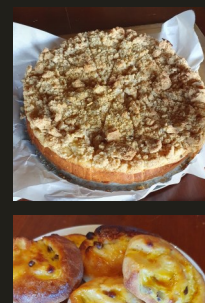
"Oh they're so sweet" said Claire  
"They're certainly not sleeping outside"  
So beds were made by the fire  
And with happiness they both sighed

So Sally and Ben found their forever home  
And never stopped wagging their tails  
They learnt how to look after the sheep  
And guide them through sheep pen rails

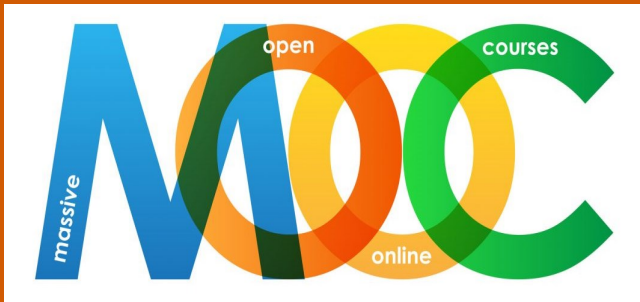
They also spent time chasing rabbits  
Because that's what they were hired to do  
So the Saga of Sally and Ben ended happily  
And they spent time with Claire and the Boss too

by Elsie Maddern

Many experts now believe that learning a foreign language at an older age is no harder than when you're a child.



Carmen Borowski has been teaching German for U3A Riverland for many years but has been hosting the small group of German enthusiasts in her home for the past couple of years. Perched high on the cliff overlooking the Kingston Bridge and the mighty River Murray, it's hard to stay focussed when Whistling Kites soar past and birds of every kind pop into the bird bath for a drink or wash. Not only is the view stunning, Carmen loves baking and every session ends with Kaffe und Kuchen. We often tell her that the German we learn is incidental. Every few weeks, Carmen's husband Joe whips up a mountain of crepes ... or as the Germans call them "Palachinka". Served with a selection of home-made jams or lemon & sugar, they're extremely hard to resist.



[www.gooduniversitiesguide.com.au](http://www.gooduniversitiesguide.com.au)

## FREE ONLINE COURSES BY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

A traditional classroom is limited in how many students it can serve, but millions of people around the world have access to quality education via MOOCs ... massive open online courses. The concept, spearheaded by edX, began as an opportunity for organizations to offer online courses to students all over the world, for free.

### What is a MOOC?

MOOC stands for Massive Open Online Course — a free online course available to anyone. They are similar to online courses in terms of teaching and learning methods, videos, group chats, assignments, but they do not generally provide academic credit for use in other traditional courses, nor will you have much (if any) interaction with the lecturer.

### Where can I study?

The course content for MOOCs is developed by staff from **prestigious universities** including The National University of Singapore, Trinity College Dublin, Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Australian universities have also been developing their own MOOCs, with Charles Sturt University, Australian National University, Monash University and the University of Queensland appearing on some of the global MOOC platforms such as edX.

### The benefits of a MOOC

**They're free** ... although many of the MOOC providers do charge a fee if you want your achievements officially recognised with a certificate of completion.

**No entry requirements.** There are no barriers to entry — you do not need to achieve a high ATAR score or sit an interview to participate. You only require an interest in the subject matter and a thirst for knowledge!

**Learn from the best.** MOOCs are taught by some of the foremost specialists in their fields. You don't need to be sitting in a lecture theatre at a prestigious university to take advantage of their teaching staff's knowledge.

**Collaborate with students worldwide.** There is the potential for thousands of students to be taking the same MOOC as you and there is bound to be someone to chat to across the globe about the details of your course.

There are hundreds of courses online including the following

- Agriculture
- Business and management
- Communications
- Computing and information technology
- Education and training
- Environmental studies
- Health services and support
- Humanities and social sciences
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Paralegal studies
- Psychology
- Science

**IF THIS TYPE OF LEARNING INTERESTS YOU CHECK OUT THE AVAILABILITY AT:**

[www.edx.org/search?q=MOOCs](http://www.edx.org/search?q=MOOCs)



*Thank you so much*

**Farewell Daina Braddock and Meredith Dunn**

Lunches were held at the Loxton Hotel and the Big River Tavern to thank two long-serving art tutors who have inspired the ever-growing art group. Not only is this group the longest running, it is also the largest group with up to 25 people attending any given session.