

# Newsletter

June 2024

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(Closed public holidays & school holidays)

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*Peter Moore*

## President's report

Our U3A Yarra City is a vibrant, growing, and inclusive bunch, supported because of our wonderful volunteers. We've recently asked for new committee members, and I'm pleased to say that we've had some positive responses; more news on these appointments coming. Our U3A always needs a continuing supply of new volunteers. We are keen to see people with ideas for new courses, particularly if accompanied by an offer to be a tutor. Please think about what you could offer- perhaps sharing a workplace skill or a fascinating hobby.

A small but visible recent change is our new logo featured at the top of this newsletter- a refresh that drops the 'University of the Third Age' sub-title. This was confusing to some members as we aren't a university in the commonly understood context, so it may be misinterpreted as suggesting qualifications are needed or bestowed. So, we are simply 'U3A Yarra City'. For more information, check the 'About us' page on our website at <https://u3ayarracity.org.au/about-us/>

Our demographic is particularly susceptible, and targeted, by scammers on email, SMS, and other digital platforms such as WhatsApp. A sad but true fact. Our best defence is to be aware of the risks and minimise them. I've been encouraged to see two Yarra City Forums this year by Cheryl Wong who has spoken about Scam Safety and Password Security. Another hot topic is promised for next semester. These are excellent presentations; our U3A is very keen to keep members safe online. On a similar topic, U3A Network Victoria has a monthly Zoom series 'Live Life Digitally Connected'. Check it out at <https://u3avictoria.org.au/online-courses/2024-series-live-life-digitally-connected>. All presentations made earlier this year are available for viewing. I recommend this free seminar series to members.

Please stay safe online! I'm sure all our members know about our website - the portal that takes us to the U-MAS login to enrol in courses. But have you explored the other screens on our site? There is lots of information about our group, our courses, and contact details for members and non-members.

**Cont...**

**Cont.**

It's our window to the world. We also have both public and private Facebook pages, which showcase our activities. We rely on our Tutors and members for new photos, so when you are involved in U3A activities, please record what you are doing and send the images to [u3ayarracity@gmail.com](mailto:u3ayarracity@gmail.com). All contributions welcome!

Stay safe, stay warm, and welcome to Semester 2 2024!

**Peter Moore**

## Program and forums

Our programs are going well due to the hard work of their tutors.

*The forums are still going strong with some very interesting speakers.*

A new course has been added for next term. Park Soccer is a friendly game with both beginners and those who just want to get out and chase a ball around the park. This will be held every second Tuesday at Alfred Crescent. See the course guide for more information. A way to keep warm during these cold days.

The Mah Jong class have moved to the office which the members find more convenient. A second Mah Jong class has commenced for those who are beginners. This is being run on a Wednesday morning.

The forums are still going strong with some very interesting speakers. All our other courses will be continuing into the next term.

**Maria Hudson**

## New Yarra ward boundaries

*...there will now be nine wards across Yarra...*

An independent electoral structure review panel appointed by the Minister for Local Government has reviewed the electoral structure of Yarra City Council. The new ward structure will be in place for the 2024 Council election, and there will now be nine wards across Yarra with each ward containing approximately the same number of voters. Each ward will elect only one Councilor. The new wards are:

- Boulevard Ward
- Curtain Ward
- Hoddle Ward
- Langridge Ward
- Lennox Ward
- MacKillop Ward
- Melba Ward
- Nicholls Ward
- Yarra Bend Ward

For more information on council elections:

<https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/elections-2024>

**Christine Gibbs**

## Yarra City's first Mah Jong group

Most of Melbourne's U3A chapters have had a Mah Jong group for many years – but not Yarra City. This changed in February when experienced player Maureen Schultz offered to set up and tutor a group, supported by Pam Kershaw as second tutor.

*While Mah Jong is not a complicated game to learn, it does require a lot of practice to identify the best possible hands to play...*

The 16 spots were quickly filled, mainly with enthusiastic beginners, but a few experienced players signed up to help coach during the first semester.

While Mah Jong is not a complicated game to learn, it does require a lot of practice to identify the best possible hands to play from the 13 tiles initially dealt to each player. The excellent book used by the group 'The Mah Jong Player's Companion' by Patricia A Thompson and Betty Maloney lists more than 120 hands – but there are many more.



Once you've mastered at least some of the hands, Mah Jong becomes a lot of fun to play, with some unexpected twists and turns as new tiles are picked up and others discarded.

Most beginners have progressed well in the new group but, inevitably, a few people realised this game was not for them. There are now a couple of vacancies in the group for experienced players who can play reasonably fast and don't need coaching.

There's been some good cross-pollination with the Melbourne City Mah Jong group too, with half a dozen people now playing in both groups.

Mah Jong - Experienced Players is on Wednesday afternoons from 1.30pm to around 4pm in the U3A office in Stanton Street.

There's also a new beginners' group on Wednesday mornings tutored by Maria Hudson.

Check out the course listings for more information and to enrol.

**Pam Kershaw**

## Yarra Refugee Welcome Program

To support the Yarra Refugee Welcome Program (featured on page 4), donations can be made by direct bank deposit  
**BSB: 633000 Acc:208369132**

## A family makes their home in our country

The Yarra Refugee Welcome Group was established to help a refugee family settle here in Melbourne as part of the Federal Government's 'Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) scheme.'

In October last year, with the support of U3A Yarra City, we raised around \$20,000, which provided the bulk of the funds needed to supplement Centrelink benefits to support the family for their first year in Australia.

After demonstrating that we could offer the necessary support, we undertook the required online training and started planning. Then in early February, we were informed of the family assigned to us: Ali Reza Amini and Rahima Amini, their two daughters, Zainab (12) and Zuhra (10), and their son Ali Azghar (8). After fleeing Afghanistan, they had been living stateless in Delhi for eight years.

In late March, the family arrived! They had little English, and communication has been a challenge, but we've used phone-up interpreting services, Dari speakers in both our and their circles, an online interpreting app, and gesturing!

Short-term accommodation was provided by Barbara – a huge job. Numerous tasks such as Centrelink registration, Medicare and Myki cards, school enrolments, etc were attended to. They – and we – have had lots of fun along the way. The children learned to ride the bikes that were donated and are learning to swim. Barbara's place became a hive of activity. Two children's birthdays were celebrated, as was Eid (the end of Ramadan), with lots of dancing, music, eating, and more!



Now the family has moved into a 3-bedroom house in Hampton Park, which they are delighted with. Furniture, white goods, bedding, and more have been donated. About 30,000 Afghans (80% of Victoria's Afghan community) live in the municipalities of Casey and Greater Dandenong, and Hampton Park is at the epicentre of this community.

The Aminis are a delightful family, keen to build a new life here, and appreciate our efforts to help them do so.

Looking ahead, the children are enrolled in the local primary school, and parents Reza and Rahima will continue to learn English and also seek work. The family will be building all sorts of connections in their new community.

Reza said– via Google Translate – that he felt like they had begun life anew, that they now felt human. The family is very grateful for our generosity but of course, there are new challenges, especially obtaining a second-hand car. If you would like to help, you can donate to our bank account - see page 3.

**Rob Salter, Yarra Refugee Welcome Group**

**Short-term accommodation was provided by Barbara – a huge job.**

## Beginners French

Bonjour je m'appelle June. Ever wanted to parle français? If so, I highly recommend Mink Schapper's Beginners French.

*...she has created a supportive learning environment where we feel comfortable to 'have a go'.*

My story is I learnt French at school in Belfast. We spoke French with a Northern Irish accent. Needless to say when I went to France no one could understand a word of what I said. Disheartened I gave up and learnt the very handy phrase 'Do you speak English?' So when I came to Mink's class I was keen to rectify this.

Mink is a great teacher, she has created a supportive learning environment where we feel comfortable to 'have a go'. Her emphasis on pronunciation has given me confidence that I may well be understood.

There is also lots of laughter in our class especially when we practise putting on our best French accent. People walking past might be lucky enough to hear a lovely rendition of 'Pirouette Cacahuète' a French children's song. From a timid start we are now belting it out! Again, this song has honed our pronunciation.

Next year I plan to visit France and am hoping to practise my French. I will keep you posted on how I get on.

**June Savage**

## French explored and practised

With tutor Mink Schapper.

*We have weekly 'Speed Chats' in pairs or small groups where we practise our spoken French and our listening comprehension.*

In this class we practise many aspects of the French language. We revise the alphabet and numbers. We do dictation which helps with listening and writing in French. As well, we learn about French grammar. This year we have learned about various verb tenses. We have weekly 'Speed Chats' in pairs or small groups where we practise our spoken French and our listening comprehension. This term the focus has been on food. In our speed chats we have been talking about the things we like to cook and eat and our favourite restaurants and wines.

At the end of each term we have 'Conversation, Café et Gâteau' (Conversation, Coffee and Cake) where we spend the whole class speaking and listening to each other in French. I really enjoy this class. It is a good way for me to maintain and develop French speaking, listening, reading and writing.

**Victoria Kemp**

## Mixed park soccer

Calling those with a pang for soccer or for newbies who just want to get active and give it a go.

*Mark is aiming for a five a side game...*

Mark Close offers this new U3A course to all who are looking to have a fun game of park soccer at a civilised pace – definitely no tackling or taking the game seriously. All skill levels, fitness, experience or otherwise will be accommodated.

Mark is aiming for a five a side game – or perhaps just a handful of would be ‘sporting champs’ kicking the ball around.

The games will be held fortnightly on Tuesday mornings starting at 9.30am at the Alfred Crescent Oval, Edinburgh Gardens, North Fitzroy.

First game is on **Tuesday 30th July** at 09:30am – Try outs welcome on **16th July** at 09:30 before enrolment.

For any queries, contact Mark Close on [markclose2016@gmail.com](mailto:markclose2016@gmail.com)

## Monday movies

*...experience the joys of the big screen.*

This is a regular monthly event for those who love movies and who are not frequent visitors to the cinema but like a set date to explore and experience the joys of the big screen. It is a venue for meeting new people, joining together afterwards for coffee and a discussion about the film. What was your experience and why? Was the film one you would not have chosen to see? Discuss your reaction.

The time engenders a spirit of comraderie, a place to stimulate our brains and, most importantly, have fun.

**Annie O’Loan**

## Yarra retirement village tours

Last year U3A ran a course Planning for a Safer Older Age and last term we teamed up with Aveo Retirement villages to run five Downsizing sessions.

Both courses raised interest for members contemplating the pros and cons of downsizing, moving or renovating and organising for later years. The general notion was that we all need to explore our options whilst fit and healthy.

There are now several retirement villages in the City of Yarra offering independent apartment or unit living with supportive services, activities, pools, theatres and even Wellness Centres.

In August/September, we plan to visit these centres so members can investigate, increase their knowledge and swap information of what is available locally, in order to assist future decision making.

Further information will be published in the U3A Bulletin. Any thoughts or ideas please contact Susannah at [sdax@optusnet.com.au](mailto:sdax@optusnet.com.au)

*...several retirement villages in the City of Yarra offering independent apartment or unit living...*

## Landmarks in Australian Literature

Teresa Pitt started this book group back in 2009, sixteen years ago. She chooses eleven books for us each year, which means that we've worked our way through 171 books so far!

*We often discuss things that are not in accordance with her prepared questions, but there are always great ideas flowing around the room.*

The authors are either Australian born or have immigrated to Australia, and the books have ranged from the 19th century to the present day. We've read and discussed novels, plays, memoirs, biographies and histories, and even a little poetry.

Each month, Teresa emails the class members a set of notes that includes some biographical information about the author, some details about the book and its publication, a selection of review quotes – both positive and negative – that she has sourced, and a list of questions for discussion.

We often discuss things that are not in accordance with her prepared questions, but there are always great ideas flowing around the room.

We've had several different locations for the group over the years but are now firmly ensconced at Bargoonga Nganjin Library in North Fitzroy.

This year we've read, among others, *Of Ashes and Rivers that Run to the Sea* by Marie Munkara, *This Devastating Fever* by Sophie Cunningham, *My Heart is a Little Wild Thing* by Nigel Featherston, and *The Empty Honour Board* by Martin Flanagan. We're still looking forward to *My Father's Shadow* by Sandra Goldbloom Zurbo, *Floundering* by Romy Ash, and *The Animals in that Country* by Laura Jean McKay.

Please note: This is a very popular group that always has a waiting list. Therefore it is important to enrol on the day that enrolments open!

**Chris Friday**



## Richmond Walking Group

*...we walked the streets of Burnley, an area rich in Victoria's history with a mix of Victorian, Edwardian, and interwar houses.*

It was a fine day for our February walk around East Melbourne, which included Parliament Gardens Reserve, hearing the histories of the Princess Theatre, Parliament House, the Reserve itself, the G J Coles Fountain, Pastor Sir Doug and Lady Gladys Nicholls statues, as well as St Peters Cathedral, the East Melbourne Synagogue, and former ICI House. Due to the rising temperature, over 30 degrees by 11 am, we ambled to St Patrick's Cathedral and the gardens before adjourning to the Fitzroy Gardens Cafe.

Despite the forecast rain, our April Walk was sunny. Starting at the new Australia Post building on the corner of Swan and Burnley Streets, we walked the streets of Burnley, an area rich in Victoria's history with a mix of Victorian, Edwardian, and interwar houses. Golden Square, part of the former Police Paddocks used for the agistment of horses, was also home to Burnley Primary School for many years. Crimea Street had a group of significant houses erected for the workers of Clements Langford, a prominent Melbourne builder whose projects included the Manchester Unity Building. The Barret Burston Maltings, silos and factory from the 1860s, originally Terry's Burnley Brewing, is now being converted into housing. The Matt Hill rooftop sculpture, named Hope, is a memorial to Vince, a white rhinoceros killed by poachers in a Paris Zoo in 2017. Before heading to a cafe, we passed the 1928 neo-classical/Adam-style cinema in Swan Street.



The June Walk occurred on the King's Birthday holiday, a cold but sunny 7-degree day. The walk took us through Burnley Park to Fairview Park in Hawthorn, before returning over the Yarra to the Burnley Horticultural Gardens, visiting the Summer House, the Luffmann Ponds, the sunken gardens and the wisteria walk. We then trammed it to the French Patisserie for coffee in Richmond Village.

Two walks were cancelled due to hot weather in March then the tutor being overseas in June.

**Wendy Hall Tutor**

## It's a Sauso ...

### contemporary dilemmas

I had just come from the memoir group  
We were having a coffee at Streat,  
the socially aware cafe

I arrived early for our 3 pm rendezvous,  
And ordered my traditional cappuccino

And then they offered me something,  
As they were about to close,  
A 'sauso', a big sausage roll,  
Not just one, but two,  
packaged and rubber banded.

She was not interested -  
It might not look good at her meeting.

As I was walking back  
I kept an eye out for a suitable recipient for  
number two,  
Young women, perhaps not,  
may be vegetarian,  
Young Asian male students,  
not sure,

A little browner,  
South Asians or Middle Eastern young men,  
Yet, neither Hindus nor Muslims might be  
completely comfortable,  
I am assuming the 'sauso' has meat in it,  
Beef or pork

Then I found the solution -  
A slightly older man, hairy,  
with the stub of a ciggy,  
maybe even down on his luck,  
A battler or even further down,  
an Oz male so cultural problems unlikely,

And so I offered it to him,  
And he thanked me with an effusion of gratitude,  
A goal late in the day,  
One more everyday dilemma solved,  
And I still have the other one to heat up.

\* Stephen Alomes' prose poetry collection *My Friends the Goldfish* 2024 Ginninderra Press.

**Stephen Alomes**

## Café Poems

### Speaking

At Bellboy, we could have used  
the table disc with the QR code,  
but instead we spoke to the man  
at the counter.

In Coles, we could have used  
the self-checkout,  
but instead we hovered near  
service lane 4 and were served  
by a checkout girl who spoke to us.

Sometimes it pays to  
almost look your age.

### Oasis

Everyone is arriving at  
the CERES cafe.

They hug and greet each other.  
'Happy New Year.'  
'How was your holiday?'  
'Good, yeah.'

They have their hats on,  
ready for some outdoor work.

We used to bring the kids here  
forty years ago,  
when it was hardly more than  
an idea  
of reclaimed land on the old  
Moreland Council dump.

Now a city farm. Yeah.

**Rachel Flynn**

## Member profile

### **Maria Hudson**

#### **What brought you to U3A?**

Following my return to Australia I wasn't sure what I was going to do. Mary Walker, a friend had posted a Facebook post about bonsai. I thought this would be ideal as I have a small terrace not a garden. I asked her for some tips. She told me about the U3A Bonsai group. My only experience with bonsai was many years ago when I had one plant on my balcony back in NYC. It died. This was my opportunity to learn more. I joined this U3A so I could attend the bonsai group and haven't looked back.

#### **What was your work before retirement?**

I was a teacher and later a principal before going to New York to work as an Education Consultant. I worked with teachers supporting them in developing mathematical understanding for their students. I also worked on curriculum development for various school districts. It was an interesting time. I loved my 18 years there.

#### **What's the best thing about being a U3A member?**

Meeting new people. Since joining U3A I have made new friends and explored new activities.

#### **How did you become Program Coordinator?**

I was invited to come to a meeting to see what it would be like. The committee members were most welcoming. When elected to the committee I took on the Program Coordinator role. Little did I realise how much work was involved. David Lee has been very supportive in helping me through the intricacies of the role.

#### **Which groups do you participate in?**

I now have a terrace full of bonsai trees. As a friend says 'tree torture'. My trees give me pleasure when I'm having breakfast or dinner. I also joined the cryptic crossword group as these have always intrigued me. We had a great mentor in Anne Molloy, who died in 2023. As a group we have continued meeting trying to decipher why a clue led to a particular answer. Currently I am running a beginners Mah Jong group on Wednesday mornings.

#### **Other hobbies?**

I knit for charity. On these cold evenings an ideal hobby. In between I knit for myself. I just love the feel of wool and I play Mah Jong with a group of friends when I can. Not really a hobby but I am a subscriber to the Australian Ballet and Melbourne Theatre Company. Love doing 1000 piece jigsaws. Just completed one of the MET in New York. When I can I love traveling.

#### **What is your special place in the City of Yarra?**

The river. It flows behind my place and makes me think of how the ebb and flow of water is life.

#### **Any special message to the members?**

There are so many classes on offer led by many dedicated people. I'm sure you can find one to match your needs.



Interview by **Susannah Dax**

## Photo gallery



*Graham and Anne, table tennis*



*Coffee after Spanish class*



*Monday Movies at the Kino*



*Lisa & Michaela from Waste Services Yarra*



*Harrie Fasher sculpture Australian Galleries*



*Pickleball with Robyn, Annie, Jennifer & Peter*

## Diary dates

### 2024

- 29 Oct: AGM Guest speaker Gary Presland  
 15 Nov: Closing date for November Newsletter  
 25 Nov: Enrolments open for 2025

### Semester dates 2024

- Term 3: 15 Jul – 20 Sep  
 Term 4: 7 Oct – 20 Dec



## Committee 2024

- President:* Peter J Moore  
*Vice President:* Viv Blanksby  
*Secretary:* Viv Blanksby  
*Treasurer:* Sue Kurt  
*Program Coordinator:* Maria Hudson  
*Database team:* Frank Moore  
*Tutor Liaison:* Barry Giddings  
*Health and Safety Officer:* Barry Giddings  
*Convener, Publicity and Communications:* Peter Moore  
*Membership Officer:* Barry Giddings  
*Member:* Jan Tinetti

### Ex Officio positions

- Office Manager:* Mary Walker  
*Newsletter:* Tina Hocking, Lyn Morgan, Susannah Dax

## Connect with U3A Yarra City

**Facebook:** Send photos and articles to our email address [u3ayarracity@gmail.com](mailto:u3ayarracity@gmail.com) with Facebook in the Subject line or go directly via [Facebook](#).



**Web:** [www.u3ayarracity.org.au](http://www.u3ayarracity.org.au)

**On Yer Bike:** <https://onverbike-u3a.org.au>

**News & Events Bulletin:** Latest news communication via email

**Newsletter:** Published March, June and November.  
 Email [u3ayarracity@gmail.com](mailto:u3ayarracity@gmail.com) with Newsletter in the Subject line, or post to:  
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