



Editor's Notes from Jean Smith

Since joining U3A in 2006, I have been a 'Friday' girl. Chores completed, house tidy – Friday was my reward. Away from the suburbs and into the city. Real coffee at a soon-to-become favourite coffee shop, reacquainting myself with Latin after a 40-year absence, and beginning friendships which are still in place today. But this year I am a 'Tuesday girl'. Different! Apart from the tutor, I didn't recognise anyone – fellow students, office staff, IT support – not a soul. It felt strange. But by the end of the first class, I realised it wasn't really so different from my 'Friday girl' experience. Classmates eager to learn from a knowledgeable tutor. Office staff ready to guide me where to go and what to do. The fact that U3A is still going strong after the events of the past year is testimony to the strength of its members and their willingness to adapt to changing circumstances.

Who knows – I might even try being a 'Monday' girl next term!



President's Message from Des Taylor

February has been an exciting month for U3A Brisbane. Both Creek St and Adelaide St premises are now connected to the NBN. This has gone smoothly, thanks to our IT Manager, Greg Taylor. We have reopened our Face-to-Face classes in the city venues and I would like to thank all of our members and volunteers who cooperated so beautifully with our strict COVID Safe plan to ensure we all remained safe. Thanks also must go to our COVID Safe committee who devised these plans in line with Government rules. This committee, chaired by Neil Brown and ably assisted by willing volunteers, has worked consistently to ensure that we had everything in place for 2021. Other changes that have been introduced have also been successful. Members in city venues in Face-to-Face classes are now paying up front for the Term instead of before each class. This has reduced the

congestion in the venues and also ensured that no one needed to handle cash, which is an added risk in the COVID world.

Members in Zoom classes were asked for a voluntary upfront donation of \$25. They have generously responded. Thanks to their generosity, U3A can now buy Zoom licenses for any Tutor wishing to run an online class. The new licenses will commence in Term 2 and will be allocated in response to requests from Zoom Tutors in both the city and Districts.

I have been amazed at the willingness of our members to 'tackle' new concepts. The QR Code is being used in all Face-to-Face classes to record attendance. This has been a challenge for some but with members helping each other if necessary, it is an example of the true U3A spirit of working together to achieve our goals.

A number of our tutors are now running concurrent Zoom and Face-to-Face classes. Marty Gellender has offered to help any tutor wishing to try this. It is a way of allowing more people to enrol in a class and still stay within the constraints of the Government's 2 Square Metre rule.

Remember to stay aware of COVID risks. We are not yet out of the woods. As an example, you would be aware of reports that COVID particles have been found in inner Brisbane and Redlands that could indicate infected individuals in these districts. Therefore, even though the vaccine rollout has commenced, there will be no relaxation of COVID Safe rules now or in Term 2.

Stay Safe. Enjoy your classes.

Term 2 Classes

The Term 2 Class Schedule will be available on the U3A Brisbane website on **Sunday 21st March**. Because of room capacity limitations at present, please ensure that you enrol early. You **must** be enrolled in order to attend a class.

Current Government Health advice (27th Feb 2021)

To prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay home if you are sick
- If you have any [COVID-19 symptoms](#), no matter how mild, [get tested](#)
- Stay 1.5 metres away from other people—think two big steps
- Wash your hands with soap and water, or hand sanitiser
- Leave a location if it is crowded.

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/urgent-covid-19-update>

Northside and City Precinct News from Rod McLary

Now that Covid restrictions are easing, some classes are returning to face-to-face – albeit with social distancing and reduced numbers. It is reassuring to know that members are still seeking the intellectual and social stimulation from U3A.

Other classes are continuing with Zoom as there are some decided advantages – no travel on public transport and members can join a Zoom class from anywhere in Brisbane. Zoom classes tend to be longer than face-to-face classes as well. But the important thing is that the availability of both allows members a choice as to which suits them better.

In the Northside district, classes such as Italian and 'The Nature and Theory of Crime' discussion group recommenced in Term 1 and will continue into Term 2. It is also good to see the Northside Walking Group continuing, and the Sunday Walking Group starting up again in Term 2. Croquet classes are also available – the

classes run only for three weeks and provide an entry into the Croquet club. There are still some classes that cannot restart due to particular restrictions, but this may change later in the year.

In the City Precinct district, a similar picture emerges. Most classes have returned to face-to-face, with one remaining on Zoom and one transferring to the City Campus. These classes will continue into Term 2.

When the new Class Schedule becomes available later this month, it is always worth checking which classes are offered and which ones have vacancies for new members. There is always a good selection.

Our tutors are to be thanked for their continuing commitment to offering their classes during these times.

Logan District News from Martin Bridgstock

Australia has handled the Covid 19 outbreak very well. As vaccines start to appear, it is likely that we will be able to return more closely to our normal way of life -- I am so looking forward to that! Through all the outbreaks and lockdowns, about half the Logan courses have kept going in some form, and the tutors have done a wonderful job with this. They have found other venues, or used Zoom, and also implemented the Covid safety plan. Thank you, everyone.

Many Logan members are wondering when the Logan City libraries will become available again. I have contacted the library authorities, and two answers have been given. One is that for the immediate future, the library rooms will be closed to us, because they are being used to quarantine books. The other is that once the rooms become available, we can apply to use them along with everyone else. I think this means that we will be able to use the rooms, but not as much as we did before. We will do the best we can.

From Classroom to Zoom to Hybrid Classes: One Tutor's Experience from Marty Gellender

Like many U3A tutors during 2020, I transitioned my U3A Science class from a face-to-face class in Room 18 at Adelaide Street, to a class conducted on-line via Zoom. This was an interesting exercise in learning how to use Zoom and adapting my teaching style to suit this medium. Then, in 2021, we had the opportunity to resume face-to-face classes. I was keen to get back to the classroom, and some of my students were too, but many expressed a strong preference to continue the class remotely via Zoom. Some were concerned about the risk of coming into the city while the pandemic remained a threat, but many considered travelling into the city to be a chore, and they liked the convenience of attending the class from home or wherever they happened to be. So, I decided to transition my Science class once again, to become a "hybrid class" - that is, taught face-to-face in the classroom, while simultaneously being communicated to a remote audience via Zoom. It seemed that this might not simply be an interim step until the Covid-19 pandemic receded, but might well be the "new normal" for classes in the future. This article relates my experience of the journey so far.

During the initial transition to remote classes last year, tutors like myself had to learn the technical aspects of using Zoom (how to schedule Zoom "meetings", choose meeting settings, select which microphone or speaker to use, share my screen, etc). Greg Taylor at U3A told me where I could buy a webcam (no mean feat at that time, as webcams had disappeared off shop shelves faster than toilet paper) and helped me with a few technical problems. Mostly, it was a matter of stumbling and bumbling along until I got the hang of using Zoom. In the middle of one class, I somehow had logged myself out, and had trouble getting back in. I felt like the captain of a ship who had fallen overboard. For a few excruciating minutes, I had lost my own class in cyberspace! But, in the end, everything worked out pretty well.

I also had to learn how to manage a Zoom class, and class-members had to learn how to participate. With

40-or-so people attending my Science class, there would invariably be someone whose microphone picked up a shrill squeal of feedback, the sound of dogs barking, telephones ringing, garbage trucks and other distracting extraneous noises. The class and I soon learned that everyone needed to keep their microphones muted unless someone actually wanted to ask a question or make a comment to the class. I also had to adapt my personal teaching style. Previously, I liked to walk around the front of the classroom, explaining and gesturing, and drawing illustrations on the whiteboard as I spoke. Teaching via Zoom confined me to sit in front of my computer. While Zoom offers a whiteboard feature (that can be used with the touchscreen on a tablet), it felt awkward and clumsy – like painting a picture using a mop instead of a paintbrush.

Holding virtual classes via Zoom allowed me to continue the class, and to keep myself and the students interested, engaged and doing something worthwhile during a difficult period when other activities ceased. However, I did miss the interaction, instant visual feedback and engagement that you get from a face-to-face class that goes well.

Towards the end of last year, U3A decided that face-to-face classes could resume in Term 1 of 2021, with the number of students limited to something like 60% of each classroom's previous capacity. I expected that most students would prefer to resume attending classes in person, which would exceed the allowed capacity in the classroom. However, surveying the class (using the polling feature on Zoom), I was surprised that only a third expressed a preference to attend in person, and two-thirds preferred to continue via Zoom. To satisfy the needs of these two groups, and my own preference, I decided to run the class face-to-face and - simultaneously - via Zoom, starting in Term 1. In the current jargon, this is called a "hybrid" or "parallel" class.

In the Term 1 schedule of classes, my Science class is listed as two separate courses. Students enrol to Either attend the face-to-face class Or to attend via Zoom. Because of limited classroom capacity, I asked that students enrol for the face-to-face class only if they expect to attend most classes. From time to time, people may not be able to attend a particular class due to illness, medical appointments, visitors or other circumstances, in which case, they can still join via Zoom.

Basically, I run the class like a normal Zoom class, as I did last year. Instead of sitting in front of my home computer, I sit in front of the laptop computer in the classroom. During the class, I "share my screen" most of the time, so that everyone can see my notes, which contain drawings, photographs, tables and text that I use as prompts for discussion. When I share my screen, my notes appear on the television at the front of the classroom (as well as on the screens of people attending remotely). When I'm not in "screen sharing" mode, the television shows the people who are participating remotely via Zoom. So, the television provides a visual and audio link between people in the classroom with those who are attending remotely.

This generally works well. If someone watching via Zoom asks a question or makes a comment, people in the room will hear them through the television speaker. However, people in the classroom are too far from the microphone for their questions or comments to be heard by those viewing via Zoom. So, when someone in the classroom asks a question or makes a comment, I try to remember to paraphrase the questions before I respond.

Back in "normal" times, I tended to use the whiteboard at the front of the room, but this is no longer viable, since people watching via Zoom will not see it.

Also, back in “normal” times, I tended to walk around in front of the classroom. I have bought a wireless microphone, and this enables those watching via Zoom to still hear me (but not see me) when I walk away from the computer desk. This works fine while I am sharing my screen (since then, Zoom people are looking at my notes, and don’t need to see me). However, while the wireless microphone works really well, it hasn’t been as useful as I thought it would be. I mostly sit in front of the laptop computer. It is nice to be able to walk away from the computer desk and still be heard, but it is certainly not essential.

Running a “hybrid class” presents extra challenges, but overall, seems to be well worth the effort. As with most things, it helps to be prepared. I get to the classroom about 20 minutes before it starts. This allows time for me to scan the QR code on my mobile phone (as everyone attending currently must do), download my notes and any videos I expect to show, turn on the television, log into Zoom and join the meeting, check that people attending via Zoom can see and hear me, and check that the room is set up with the right number of chairs. After the class, it takes a few minutes to log out of Zoom, close my notes and remove my USB memory stick, and turn off the television.

Hybrid classes might well become the “new norm” for the post-Covid world.

State Conference 2021 and Competitions from Greg Doolan

Further information about these events can be found at
<https://www.u3aqld.org.au/>

U3A Network Qld State Conference 2021 - Stanthorpe

12 May to 13 May 2021



About Stanthorpe



Population: 5,500
State: Queensland
Climate: Sub-tropical Highland
Temperature: 10-15 °C in May
Timezone: AEST (UTC +10)
Location: 220km West of Brisbane

U3A Granite Belt is delighted to host the 2021 U3A Network Qld State Conference and Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 12th May and Thursday 13th May 2021. We will be pleased to welcome delegates from U3As throughout Queensland and interstate.

Conference website: www.u3aqldconference.org

Announcing the Coolest U3A Photography Competition

Theme

Mother Nature

The competition is open to **ALL** members of U3A in Queensland

The winner will be announced at the 2021 U3A Network QLD Conference in Stanthorpe on 12th and 13th May

All entries are to be sent digitally to: info@u3aqlldconference.org

The competition will open on Monday 1st February and will close on 31st March

Cost: \$5.00 per photo with a limit of 2 photos per person.

Details of payment:

Payment to be made by direct deposit to:-

BSB: 638010:

Account No: 13712268

Message: Name and Photo

(if you are transferring from a Heritage Bank Account, please use S1 after the account number)

International AIUTA Arts Competition

An international arts competition is being conducted by AIUTA, the worldwide body of U3As, based in Toulouse France, the birth place of the U3A movement. AIUTA ran a smaller competition last year in which Noel Bird (Noosa U3A) and John Crittenden (Broadbeach U3A tutor) were awarded prizes for their ceramics and singing categories respectively. Perhaps there are U3A Brisbane members who can repeat this success.

The link to the registration form is as follows: www.u3aqlld.org.au/uploads/1/2/5/2/125247056/registration_form_2.pdf



Universities of the third age International awards

February - May 2021

Regulations

Competition Number 1 : Poetry

You will write a poem on the theme of "Art for a New Stage of Life ».

Competition Number 2: Drawing/ Painting

On the medium of your choice (paper, cardboard, canvas, etc.) you will create a drawing or a painting on the theme of "Art for a new stage of life". There are no particular rules when it comes to the creation tool (pen, pencil, brush, markers, charcoal, calligraphy).

Competition Number 3 : Creativity

Do you have a manual hidden talent? You can join this category by creating all kinds of things, cut paper, origami, masking tape (creative hobbies with scotch tape). You are free to create what you want according to your skills.

Competition Number 4: Singing

Record a song, or write a song about the University of the Third Age, which may be the next official U3A anthem.

Competition Number 5 : Photography

Take a photo of yourself or your activity and add a few comments.

Competition Number 6 : Dancing

Send us a video about your choreography.

Competition Number 7 : Fashion/garments/costumes

Show your originality in terms of clothing, fashion or costume

Competition Number 8 : Computer science

Use artificial intelligence to show your imagination in the use of new technologies

<https://www.aiu3a.org>

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