



# U3A Granite Belt Newsletter

## December 2020 **U3A**



Happy Christmas



Volume 16 Number 11

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**Nikola Tesla** predicted the internet.

In 1990 he wrote an article for Century Magazine describing a "world system" of wireless communications that could send telephone messages, news, music and pictures to any part of the world.

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### Newsletter deadline:

There will be no January. Deadline for February will be the usual 25<sup>th</sup>.to:

[u3agbnews@gmail.com](mailto:u3agbnews@gmail.com)

### Editorial

Calvin Winks

This time last year we were bidding farewell to the year 2019, with the hope and expectation of a better year in 2020.

Oh, how wrong we were, with the COVID-19 pandemic changing the way we went about our daily life and causing the cancelling or modification of the way U3A Granite Belt went about it's group activities.

From my view, most groups were able to remain active without increased risk.

And now is the time to look towards next year and consider new group activities.

In this regard, after the recent Management Committee meeting, our Secretary has put together an outline (on page eight) of what we need to consider and possible new courses.

Do make the effort of indicating the top three of your choice – **deadline Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

And, finally a big welcome to our new member Kay Bird. Kay's interests are the walking and garden Groups.

*Happy Christmas Calvin*

### Coming in 2021

#### Conference 2021

The U3A Network Conference will be held at the International Club in May next year.

A website for the conference is being developed. A feature will be photographs which highlight the beauty and scenic delights. Members are asked to provide a couple of photos and send them to [u3aconference21@gmail.com](mailto:u3aconference21@gmail.com)

The organising sub-committee has applied for support funding through various sources.

The photographers in U3As throughout Queensland can share their skills by entering the *Cooldest Photography Competition* in the state. The theme is *Mother Nature* and the competition entry will be from end of January 2021 until 31st March 21. Entries will be limited to three per person with a \$10.00 per photo entry fee.

Please consider the option of "billeting" one or two of the delegates to assist them to attend the conference. It would be a great opportunity to meet members of U3A from other areas of Queensland. Interested? Please contact Julie on 0417 074 520.

*Julie Barnes*



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**Reports**

**President's Report**

John Smales

How does anyone write a report on the 2020 U3A Granite Belt Inc year? Quickly, I hope!

The year started with a postponed Annual General Meeting that left Julie holding the reins for an extra six months in trying circumstances with the majority of activities postponed or cancelled. Thanks Julie. You did a wonderful job that included persevering with the 2021 Conference which, at the time, we did not know if it would go ahead.

Moving ahead to 21<sup>st</sup> August when we held the AGM, a new Management Committee was elected and off we went only to find great difficulty in organizing activities and meetings because of the constant changes to the Covid 19 restrictions.

As a group, we seem to have survived and we can only hope that we continue to do so in the future as we find out what this *new normal* will look like.

At the Management Committee meeting on Tuesday, a number of new activities/courses were suggested for next year. Some are listed on page eight of this newsletter for your perusal and to suggest which ones interest you. Please take advantage of the opportunity to make your suggestions known.

The February 2021 Management Committee meeting will be held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> at 10am in the Learning Centre. All activity coordinators are requested to attend the meeting to be brought up to date with the requirements/by-laws. We all need to start the new year on the same page in particular regarding casual visitors to activities.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Christmas Luncheon on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 - the last official event of this year.

Helen and I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*John Smales*

- England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.
- A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.
- When she saw her first strands of gray hair, she thought she'd dye.

**Garden Group Report**

Leon McCosker

The U3A Garden Group visited the lovely garden of **Joe and Josie Spina** at the The Summit.

Joe and Josie sold their orchard at Cottonvale and purchased a 10-acre block at The Summit in 2008. The property had a small shed and large tank and a few rows of Wilson plums and other fruit trees.

They then built a large brick home and machinery sheds and started their garden. Josie planned the large garden interplanting deciduous trees with evergreens. They have a reasonably frost-free area and have flowering jacarandas and silky oak trees and many established trees including bunya, kurrajong, bottle tree and shrubs in feature gardens, including a rose garden.

Joe has planted a variety of stone fruit, apples and grapes. He has built several igloos to grow winter vegetables and has field crops of snow peas, beans, onions, garlic and artichokes. There are citrus and edible prickly pears. They have achieved such a lot in the 12 years on the property.

Next U3A Garden Group activity will be our Christmas break-up on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December, 10.00 am at Grace Costanzo's garden at Golden Grove Winery, Ballandean. BYO chair and morning tea. We will meet at 9.30 am at Weeroona Park to carpool.



*Top photo:* Josie in front of part of her impressive rose garden

*Lower Photo:* Looking across the garden towards the extensive fruit orchard

Tuesday **Book Group**

Fran Tobin

Our November book was “A Gentleman in Moscow” by Amor Towles.

The book is focused on Count Alexander Rostov, an aristocrat in the old Imperial Russia. In June, 1922, he had to front a Bolshevik tribunal, which found him to be “an unrepentant aristocrat”. He was sentenced to house arrest in the Moscow hotel, Hotel Metropol, where he had lived when he was visiting Moscow. He was lucky that he wasn’t taken out and shot. He is escorted back to the hotel, but not to his usual room, but to a small non-luxurious attic room.

We follow Rostov’s life from then until 1954 when he finally quits the hotel. He was under house arrest for 32 years. But through other characters we learn more about Alexander, and more about the hotel itself and its staff.

Alexander also becomes a proxy father to a five year old Sophia, who was orphaned when her parents died in Siberia.

From the judicious use of footnotes, we also learn more about the history of Imperial Russia, and also of the USSR.

The language used by the author is beautifully crafted, and although it is a long novel, it does not falter. The reader’s interest is held. One member of our group said that it was the pick of the year’s reads.

December meeting: There is no set book for December, but we will continue discussion of “A Gentleman in Moscow”. We will also decide on our 2021 reading list.

Wednesday **Book Group**

Lynda Blackstock

Our group had the opportunity to choose any one of the 26 novels authored by Jodi Picoult. Our main discussion focussed on the author, her writing style and her intensive research. Picoult is known for her ‘moral dilemma’ subject matter such as killing for love, bullying, assisted suicide, LGBT rights, abortion and race relations. And, there frequently seems to be a mysterious death installed within most novels.

Member’s comments included: “Her characters were very relatable”; “authentic research”; “excellent murder mystery”; “total respect for the writer”; “emotionally drained for days after reading the novel”.

The consensus was a definite tick of approval for the several book titles our members have read. Titles included: “Sing You Home”; “The Pact”; “House Rules”; “Nineteen Minutes”; and “My Sister’s Keeper”. A few Picoult books were exchanged on the day – more Jodi Picoult reading on the way!

Interesting Jodie Picoult snippets:

- in 2007 she also wrote several issues of the comic book series “Wonder Woman”.
- recurring characters – avid Picoult fans will recognise the same characters popping up in later novels. Her comment was: "It's always great fun to bring a character back, because you get to catch up on his/her life; and you don't have to reinvent the wheel—you already know how he speaks, acts, thinks."

- four of her books have been adapted into movies.

Wednesday book group members will meet on 2<sup>nd</sup> December for the final session of 2020. Book for discussion will be “Mother Tongue” by Bill Bryson. Our meetings are always lively and enjoyable and new members are always welcome – why not join us?



**Art Gallery Update** Esme Hobba

One of the most successful exhibitions in the history of our local art gallery is still available to view until Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December. Congratulations to painter Rob Allen and Photographer Adrian Ashman for their exhibition titled: “Imagined Boundaries”.

From December 10 to January 31, the following treats will be exhibited:

“Back to the Dreaming” – Indigenous artist Cheryl Moggs/

“A Space Within” – Stanthorpe Pottery Club.

“Art As Knowledge” – Year 11 and 12 SHHS students.

“Meet the Big Guns” – (from the SRAG Collection) – Margaret Olley, William Robinson and Picasso.

**December Snippets**

**December 5, 1791** - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart died age 35 in Vienna, Austria.

**December 5, 1901** - Walt Disney (1901-1966) was born in Chicago, Illinois.

**December 16, 1770** - Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) was born in Bonn, Germany.

**Mosaics Group Report**

Julie Barnes

The group welcomed Kylie Bourne for a two-day workshop on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October. We had planned to have the workshop in late March but COVID 19 had other ideas for the world this year.

Kylie was quick to determine which members needed the most support and guided them through the process of creating large signs or working on the design for large pots. The group all had to seal their article and then create a design that fit the article.

It was then time to snip, paste and look at the design and decide what changes needed to be made, if any.

The most important outcome of the workshop is the confidence each member has been boosted. Kathy B, one of the group members, has commented that she now has the confidence to experiment with different designs. The added confidence has been shown in the designs that members are now creating. The little tips learnt about the right way to hold tile nippers to make tile cutting easier and which nippers to use for different types of tiles means that members' hands are not as sore at the end of a day of cutting and snipping.

The group would like to thank the Southern Downs Regional Council for their support and for the funding through Regional Arts Development Fund that allowed the group to continue in their pursuit of lifelong learning.

There are more photos of the house signs, garden pots and mirrors on the U3A Granite Belt Facebook page and on the Granite Belt U3A website U3A website.



Mr. Jim Midgley, Director of Teaching and Learning Toowoomba Catholic Schools with Taylah Organ and Eliza Telfer. – joint recipients of the U3A GB bursary.

Email from Andrew Kendal, Principal, St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe

Good afternoon Lynda,

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the St Joseph's School community, to thank you once again for your sponsorship of the U3A Awards for a Year 9 student.

This year, the award was split and given to two Year 9 students at last Thursday's Awards Night.

Your continued support of our school is very much appreciated.

Kindest regards

*Andrew Kendall*

Action and art from the Mosaics group



- Be thankful with the present. Never forget the past. Trust the future. Let the spirit of Christmas be your guide this Christmas.
- Have a happy and fun-filled Christmas

**History Hypotheticals** Steve Courtney

The group met in November to discuss Alfred the Great, finding much to talk about, in his bringing together the people of Wessex and other southern England kingdoms, to try to control the inexorable spread of the Danes, as they extended their influence into the Anglo-Saxon lands.

Alfred gave the Anglo Saxons purpose and structure in countering the Viking influence, and actively spread the English language, education and religion in southern England, through his opposition to the Viking invasion.

The next topic in Hypotheticals is Martin Luther, which will look at whether the protestant reformation in Europe would have happened as it did, if Martin Luther had not led it.

Next session - Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 10am at the Community Learning Centre at the High School.

**Deutsch/German** Irene Grevis-James

Hoffentlich habt Ihr dieses Jahr etwas Deutsch gelernt? Ich habe viel von Euch Allen gelernt:- Eure Reisen, Fragen, Diskussionen u.s.w.

Ich denke, wir haben auch alle Freude an der Deutschen Sprache,

Geschichte und Kultur gefunden. Es soll so weiter gehen in 2021!!

Unser letztes Datum bei RSL ist am 1/12/20, 10.00 am. Wer will, kann dann bitte mein Gast zum Mittagessen sein; aber bitte RSVP davor.

Alles Gute, 🎄 Frohe Weihnachten 🎁 und Grüße,

*Irene G-J*



**Ukulele Group** Heather Kent

The U3A Ukulele group continues to meet each Monday afternoon at 2pm at 2/91 Rich Street.

This happy and portable instrument with just four strings is very easy to learn and you can start playing a tune in just one lesson. One-on-one beginner tuition is available by prior arrangement if you'd like to try. U3A GB has two beginner ukuleles available for loan.

This year we have played several times for a couple of shut-ins at their homes as well as taking part in "International Play Music on the Porch Day" in August.

It's impossible to play a ukulele without wanting to sing along. For those who "can't sing", of course you can. You just need encouragement and trying in a safe place like the U3A Uke group.

***"If everyone played the ukulele, the world would be a better place" - Jake Shimabukuro***

Heather Kent ph. 0448 800 491

**Genealogy** Roxane Scott

Merry Christmas to everyone! For those looking into their family history, it's always interesting to reflect on how our family Christmas traditions have developed. In our house when mum made the Christmas pudding, everyone in the house at the time, had to have a stir for luck, just as her mum had done.

During October, three of the group visited the Toowoomba Family History Society. This little gem is in the grounds of the Toowoomba Cemetery and run by a very knowledgeable group of volunteers.

It was a successful morning of research and discovery. The society also has access to Qld school enrolments, Births, Deaths and Marriages and a selection of both Australian and other Qld records.

All in all, it has been an interesting year and many of our members have been successful in their research outcomes. Hopefully, 2021 will be equally successful and fruitful in our ancestor hunting but perhaps a little less disrupted!

Cheers Roxane



Toowoomba Family History Society

## Have your say

The Management Committee needs your input for new activities in 2021, In addition to the current group activities (listed on page seven) continuing in the new year. There will also be an eight-week Botany course facilitated by Fran Tobin. Further possible activities to date include:

- Puzzle Group – how to stimulate your brain waves
- Choir – singing group
- Ballroom dancing
- Versatile Video group – documentaries, movies, travels, nature, what DVD do you have to share for a movie morning?

U3A-Online also offers all U3A groups a great number of courses (worth a look). They are usually six to eight-week courses with notes available for all participants.

For 2021 the options are:

- short course on ‘Picnic at Hanging Rock’
- Myths and Legends
- Shakespeare – Rediscovering the Bard
- Philosophy
- Introduction to IT skills – for members new to using technology
- Espionage
- Design in Your Life – looks at how design impacts on our lives-from how we live to the choices we make when shopping

U3A Online courses that we have offered over the years include: Climate Change, Antarctica, Astronomy Continents on The Move, Human Biology, The Evolution of Life on Planet Earth and Train Your Brain

The usual eight-unit notes are available for these courses.

## Where to from here?

**Your input is required (essential).**

Nominate your three choices and forward the information by email to:

[u3agb@granitenet.com.au](mailto:u3agb@granitenet.com.au) Those topics/activities receiving the most interest may be considered for the coming new year.

Planning and implementing doesn't happen overnight. Our **deadline** for receipt of your top three is **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December**. Queries? Contact any of your management committee members listed on page seven.

We're looking forward to "making it all happen" in 2021!

### Scamwatch radar alert

#### Watch out for online shopping scams this holiday season

Losses to online shopping scams have increased 42 per cent this year, and Scamwatch is warning Australians to be careful when buying gifts this holiday season.

Scamwatch has received over 12,000 reports of online shopping scams so far this year, with almost \$7 million in reported losses.

"More people have been shopping online this year due to COVID-19 restrictions and scammers are now targeting people doing their Christmas shopping, including in the Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales," ACCC Deputy Chair Delia Rickard said.

"Scammers create fake websites that look like genuine online stores, offering products at very low prices and victims will either receive a fake item or nothing at all."

## Christmas Anagrams

These are all things Christmas. Unjumble the letters to find them. Brackets tell you how many words

1	I DID NAVAL FEZ (2)		4	TEND NAVAL CEDAR (2)	
2	ASS AT CENTRE (2)		5	SNAG MY LIFT VIII (2)	
3	FIN TIGGER (1)		6	GREET THICK CAT MC (4)	

## Christmas Number Initials

You have the initials of each word and the number, to work out and write in the Christmas related terms/phrases.

M on 34 <sup>th</sup> S		3 S of C (in A C C)	
9 L D		24 D on an A C	
24 D (C E)		100 C for C	

## AIMS of U3A Granite Belt Inc.

To provide members with affordable education and learning activities covering a wide range of different subjects.

To provide members with the opportunity to study and learn in a relaxed environment.

To nurture the minds, bodies, and souls of members.

### Committee

President:	John Smales	0414 505 448
Vice-President:	Steve Courtney	4683 7103
Secretary:	Lynda Blackstock	0421 327 377
Treasurer:	Marg Thomson	4685 2928
Minutes Sec:	Julie Barnes	4683 2823 or 0417 074 520
Committee Members:		
	Esme Hobba	4683 3324
	Leon McCosker	4681 1737
	Lesley Kirmsse	0488 787 905
Newsletter Ed.	Calvin Winks	0429 056 797 or
:		<a href="mailto:u3agbnews@gmail.com">u3agbnews@gmail.com</a>
Webmaster:	Lynda Blackstock	0421 327 377 or
		<a href="mailto:u3agb@granitenet.com.au">u3agb@granitenet.com.au</a>

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### Bank Account

Heritage Bank  
BSB 638070  
Account Number: 13712268  
(S21) Heritage Members only

### Groups

### Venue

### Contact/s

Book Group:	Tue	Courtney's residence	Mary	4683 7103
Book Group:	Wed	Julie Barnes' residence	Julie	4683 2823 or 0417 074 520
French		Mary-Jane's residence	Mary-Jane	0417 766 430
Garden Group		Advised each month	Kerrie & Leon	4681 1737 or 0488 732 638
			Elaine	0410 016 620
			Denise	0428 833 168
Genealogy		156 Church Road, The Summit	Roxane	0411 433 474
General Mtg		Learning Centre, McGlew St	Lynda	0421 327 377
			John	0414 505 448
German		contact Irene	Irene	0437 373 929
History Group		Advised each meeting	Kerrie	4681 1737
			Mary	4683 7103
			Lynette	4683 7255
Mosaics		see new requirements	Margy	4681 0102
Movies		Advised each outing	Ria	4681 2618
Ukulele		Heather Kent's home	Heather	0448 800 491
Walking Group		National Bank, Maryland St	Ria	4681 2618 or 0427 349 977

### Courses

History Hypotheticals	Learning Centre, McGlew St	Steve Courtney 4683 7103 or
		Julie 4683 2823

**All activities subject to current Covid-19 conditions and restrictions**

- Have a forgiving heart. Make things lighter by forgetting everything that makes you frown. Have a smile this Christmas!
- Christmas is a perfect reminder that we should never become too busy to live that we eventually forget that we need to make a life.
- "Christmas will always be as long as we stand heart to heart and hand in hand." – Dr. Seuss

Find contact details on page 5.

\*Please bring a plate to share

Other information about events is included in articles on page 1 or the group reports

<b>Monday</b>		<b>7</b> Walking Group 6:30am Ukulele Group 2:00pm	<b>14</b> Walking Group 6:30am Ukulele Group 2:00pm	<b>21</b> Walking Group 6:30am Ukulele Group 2:00pm	<b>28</b> Walking Group 6:30am
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>1</b> Book Group 10:00am German Contact Irene 10:00am	<b>8</b> Mosaics 9:00am	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b> Mosaics 9:00am	<b>29</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>2</b> Walking Group 6:30am Book Group 10:00am French 10:00am	<b>9</b> Walking Group 6:30am	<b>16</b> Walking Group 6:30am Garden Group* 10:00am	<b>23</b> Walking Group 6:30am	<b>30</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>3</b> History Hypotheticals Group 10:00am Genealogy 2:00pm	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>4</b> Walking Group 6:30am	<b>11</b> Walking Group 6:30am	<b>18</b> Walking Group 6:30am	<b>25</b>	



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