

Bayside U3A

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Offices: Beaumaris Senior Centre
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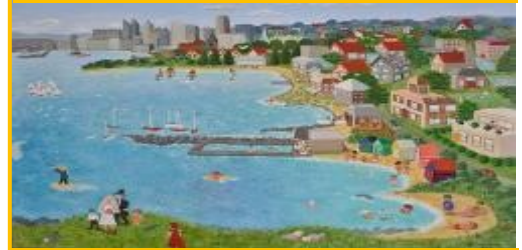
Please note: The U3A Offices are not open during lockdowns.

2021 TERM DATES

Term 4 4th October—17th December

NEWSLETTER

September No.2, 2021



Beaumaris Office:

Monday to Friday 9:30am - 2:00pm

Brighton Office

Monday to Friday 9:30am - 12noon

MELBOURNE LOCKDOWN CONTINUES...

All face-to-face classes remain cancelled in line with the extended lockdown.

Classes currently conducted by Zoom will continue for this duration unless otherwise informed.

We will update you whenever the rules change.

Contact with Bayside U3A members and families who are in need is available. Details on page 2.

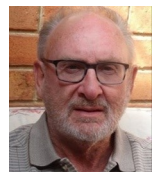
PLEASE STAY SAFE!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Tony Aplin

Dear Members,

I've deliberately stayed away from overt COVID issues, other than to encourage us all to stay happy and healthy and count our blessings, not our misfortunes. But we're now past the waiting it out phase and there is general acceptance of having to 'live with COVID'. And we are being primed to understand that many people will get sick and some will die, even when we are near 100% vaccinated, if that could be achieved. As always these are my views and ramblings. Sometimes I wonder if for many, our mindsets have progressed from the medieval days of the Black Plague and the obvious superstitions that were strongly held by many, but not all, then. And there's the fact that we had mandatory vaccinations to travel overseas not so many years ago! And there are those at the extreme, who would say "let us be 'free' – no more restrictions, no matter the impact on the many more who would suffer COVID" (vs the economic or mental health impacts).



To my mind, every time 'wealth' has been prioritised over health, we have suffered a far worse outcome. So to cut to the chase, what will be the policies re vaccination or no vaccination? Increasingly (as I write this) it seems that 'mandatory' vaccinations will (and must) become the standard and unfortunately those who medically cannot or will not be vaccinated, will be quite restricted in what they can do with others present, be that work, travel or leisure. For U3A, it may mean that only those fully vaccinated will be able to attend U3A classes, venues and offices whilst the non-vaccinated will be able to continue with Zoom. We will be guided by the health advice.

The pandemic has brought home one new truth... that it's not only martial law that can force us to have to comply with 'loss of freedoms', but also major public health events. We have seen this in terms of disastrous 'natural' events such as bushfires or floods, where compulsory evacuation orders have become common, not only for the good of those directly impacted, but because of the impact on emergency and other support workers. This is certainly the situation with COVID and goes even further in that if our health services are overwhelmed by COVID patients, it will also adversely impact people with so many other illnesses or traumas. Those who want to 'just open up' need to think of the highly likely impacts and consequences.

Continued overleaf...

Continued from the President, Tony Aplin

Obviously the issue of vaccination is, and will continue to be, a priority issue for our Committee. Primarily, we will follow health orders but we are mindful that given our membership has a median age of about 74 and therefore in the vulnerable cohort area, many of our members will not want to mix with non-vaccinated people or even attend face-to-face, no matter what.

On a closing and also depressing note, I need to mention that for some months, we have been plagued by break-ins and increasing vandalism at the Beaumaris Senior Centre. Most recently kitchen windows have been broken, a bench seat in the pergola burnt and the locker there damaged and some damage to other furniture and equipment has occurred. We are in close contact with Council on this issue and I have just received a call from the City Maintenance Engineer. A quote from their Security Contractor, that includes security cameras, has just been given the go ahead.

As I conclude, we have experienced a sizable earthquake tremor. No damage here but scary enough! Just to emphasise that it all could be a lot worse!

Please be happy and safe.

Bayside U3A Happy Hour

This event depends on Health advice. Notification will be circulated when it resumes.

5—6pm last Friday of the month

29th October, 26th November



No need to book/reply. Just turn up!

Drinks: Special \$6 sparkling or house wine, discount beer and some spirits.

Please wear your U3A name badge and bring along your RSL membership card if you have one! Dinner available for those wishing to stay on.

Hampton RSL, 25 Holyrood Street Hampton

October is Bayside Seniors Festival month



The 2021 **Bayside Seniors Healthy Ageing Festival** starts on the 1st October with online Bayside Afternoon Melodies performance at 2.30pm.

To view the Festival program, please visit

www.bayside.vic.gov.au/join-us-online-bayside-seniors-healthy-ageing-festival-2021

Bayside City Council is providing FREE Zoom training sessions next Monday 27th and Wednesday 29th September, perfect for those new to Zoom or need a refresher. Details can be found on the website or through the link above.

Do you know a Bayside U3A member in need?

Contact with Bayside U3A members and families who are in need is available.

If you hear of someone in need of a caring card or phone call, or is isolated during lockdown times, please contact me directly or via U3A.

Karen Hall sidonyhall@gmail.com 0402 891 183 or via baysideu3a@gmail.com

COURSE NEWS**Convenor: Sue Steele**

Our tutors and members have been busy during this lockdown period. We've conducted more than 250 activities on Zoom in the last month! This is a tremendous effort.

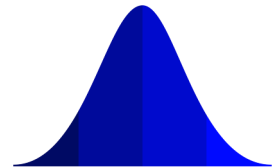
It looks as if we can't return to face-to-face activities for vaccinated members before 5th November at this stage. Rest assured we will do all we can to facilitate these activities as soon as we are able. We'll hire additional/larger rooms if necessary and look for alternate outdoor spaces where this is suitable.

Our 2022 programme planning is proceeding well. Thanks so much to the 65 tutors who have already responded to the call for 2022 convenors/activities - there are 88 activities slotted in so far. Hoping to hear from the remaining tutors soon or we'll be back in touch for confirmation.

We're always looking for fresh ideas and fresh faces. Convening an activity is enjoyable and very rewarding. We'd really like to start up some new walking groups and book groups (we can provide resources to help get these groups going) and we are always looking for more language tutors. You don't need to be a qualified teacher to take a beginner's language class and classes can be based around a suitable textbook.

STATISTICS and PROBABILITY THROUGH STORIES**Thursdays 2pm, commencing 7th October**

Probability is one of the least understood areas of mathematics. If you understood it you would never buy lottery tickets, but you might be less stressed over a positive medical test. Discover statistical concepts via stories including among other things, Bell curve failures, John Snow and cholera outbreaks in the 1850s.

Course [21154](#)Enrol online, email baysideu3a@gmail.com or leave a message on **0404 524 028****OPENDAY****BAYSIDE U3A OPEN DAY****Online****1pm to 4pm Wednesday 20th October**

We've moved our Open Day online via Zoom because of the COVID Roadmap.

Experience a taste of the wide range of activities that Bayside U3A has to offer. Meet the tutors and enjoy the company of existing members while participating in a Tai Chi class, joining a book discussion, learning about modern history or music through the ages.

Zoom in any time during the session and stay for as long as you wish.

Register online and we'll send you the Zoom link.

**LET'S DO DINNER*****Convenor, Karen Hall 0402 891 183***

Once again, our planned dinners could not proceed.
Hopefully we can meet together in November.

Proposed last dinner for the year

20th November: Cheltenham RSL – final for the year

Further details will be emailed to those enrolled in Course code: 21002.

TALL TALES AND TRUE FROM MOVIE STAR STALKER GEOFF LIPTON

More than 50 Bayside U3A members tuned in to see Geoff Lipton relate his brushes with fame, when he 'zoomed' into our living rooms with tales aplenty at our recent Speakers Programme.

Geoff's meetings with the stars included everyone from a 'grumpy' Groucho Marx, Gene Kelly and our own Paul Hogan. But his showstopper was the tale he told of seeing Charlton Heston in the nude!! What a whopper of a story it was too!

Geoff told us he thought Frank Sinatra was singing to him at a concert in Melbourne until he read the next morning that Ava Gardner was sitting in the row in front of him!

Bing Crosby's widow Kathryn formed a friendship with Geoff and sent him a jiffy bag and letter along with Bing's tweed cap. Kathryn and Geoff remained good friends for many years.

We also heard stories of Geoff's encounters with Bob Hope, Rex Harrison, Milton Berle, James Stewart, Anthony Hopkins and Marlon Brando...the list went on.

Food for thought: how close would Geoff get to today's movie stars with all those security people!



Bob Hope
one of the stars Geoff Lipton was delighted to meet.

CLASSICAL MUSIC Cor Anglais and Flute

Tutor: David Peake

Hi Everybody. This is all about the Cor Anglais and the Flute. The Cor Anglais (aka English horn) is not a horn but a close relative of the oboe. I hope that you enjoy them. Please let me know what you would like to see.

The first item, another of the Philharmonia orchestra's instrument series, gives a good background to the Cor Anglais. <https://youtu.be/TpSwkoR0Dlo>

Mozart's Adagio in F for English Horn and strings is the remaining fragment of a work dating from the late 1780's. <https://youtu.be/wn1-C3JszbU>

Dvorak's 9th Symphony (New World) is very popular work and the 2nd movement (Largo) features the Cor Anglais and all the other woodwind instruments. This splendid performance is by the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sergiu Celibidache in 1991. It was composed while Dvorak was in America in 1894. <https://youtu.be/pHyN3izk38c>

This Concerto for English Horn and Orchestra is by Peteris Vasks (b.1946) a Latvian composer. It reminds me of Delius and Sibelius. It is given a fine rendition by the Japanese soloist and the Brandenburg State Orchestra. <https://youtu.be/d-UBgRaggA>



Oboe, Cor Anglais



The principal flautist in the Philharmonia Orchestra explains the instrument very well. <https://youtu.be/MTqOckjkeE>

Vivaldi composed some 20 flute concertos and this is one of his best known ones 'La Notte'. This fine performance is by I Solisti Veneti conducted by Claudio Scimone. The flautist is Sir James Galway. <https://youtu.be/wJL23sBvVIU>

Mozart's flute concerto No.1 K313 was composed 1778 and is nicely played here by the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. https://youtu.be/1syDCEn_XOw

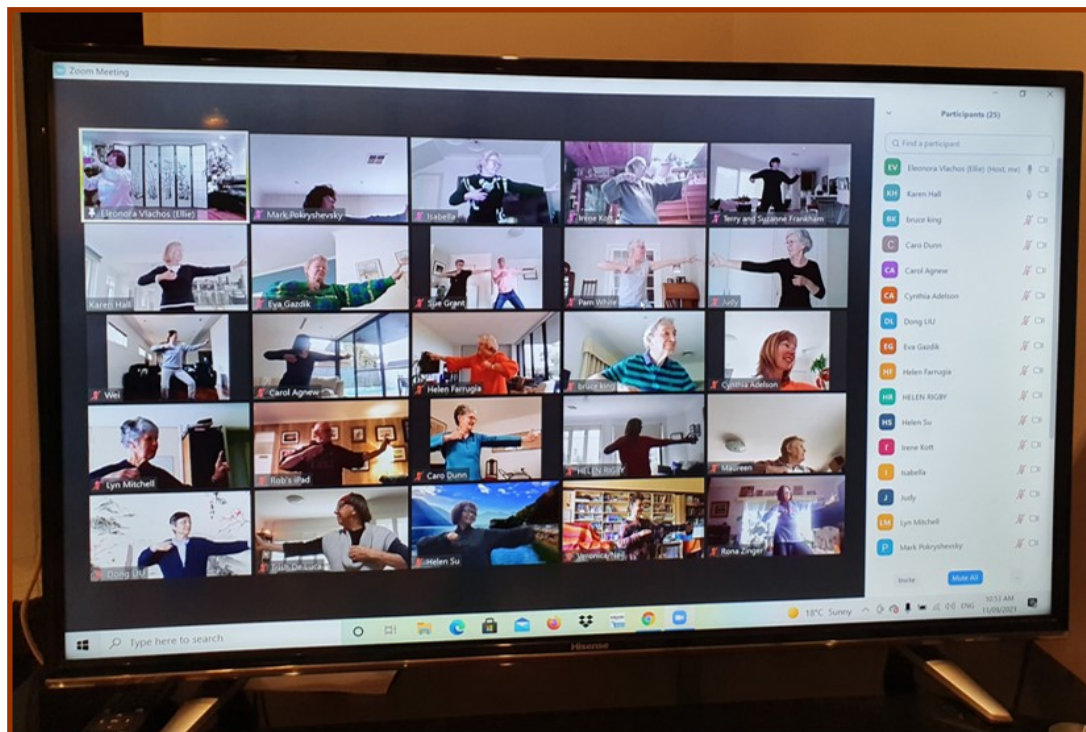
Mozart again. This time it's his Concerto for Flute and Harp K299 also composed in 1778. It is well played by the soloists and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Neville Marriner in an ornate Austrian setting. <https://youtu.be/9JoDAOSKUu4>

ENHANCE YOUR FLEXIBILITY**Convenor: Helene Redding**

Every Wednesday at 9am and Saturday at 10am during lockdown, Helene Redding conducts a Flexibility Session via Zoom. Learn ways to keep active and supple.

Sessions are designed to introduce you to ways to improve muscle strength; mobility and flexibility of joints; improve balance and posture; reduce the potential to fall and enhance wellbeing. Follow a series of simple exercises in flexibility and mobility including a balance exercise component, stretching of all muscle groups and relaxation.

If you wish to be included in this activity, email us on baysideu3a@gmail.com.

TAI CHI**Convenor: Eleonora Vlachos****THURSDAY AFTERNOON DISCUSSION GROUP****Convenor: Ralph Levy**

Our discussion group has continued throughout lock down every Thursday afternoon via Zoom. We have very robust and thought provoking discussions covering a plethora of current topics, from world affairs to issues of national and local importance or irrelevance, depending on your point of view.



Our wonderful participants cover a broad range of interests and expertise. While we are yet to resolve world peace and human relations, we all have a better appreciation of what may or may not be the issues. Not everything is as it might seem. Everyone is encouraged to have their say on all things being discussed. Each person is given respect for their view.

Recently we entertained a guest speaker, Professor Kim Rubenstein of the ANU and a regular speaker on many media national panel discussion shows. Her very authoritative and insightful thoughts were extremely well received. Kim has since announced her intention to stand as an independent at the near future Senate elections representing the ACT. We wish her well.

Your opinion matters. Your voice matters. Join us and have your say every Thursday Afternoon via Zoom @ 1.30pm

If you wish to be included in this activity, email us on baysideu3a@gmail.com or leave a message on **0404 524 028**



WAKE UP, MEDITATE, ENJOY THE DAY!

Convenor: Stephen Le Page

Why not join us for early morning meditation to get you in the right mood for the rest of the day? Every weekday at 7.30am for 30-40 minutes we meet on Zoom for a rejuvenating, uplifting and calming meditation. It sets the tone for the day. Here's what some current participants say:

"...letting you know how much I appreciate the morning meditations. They give me a reason to leap out of bed Monday - Friday and add structure to my day."

"Today's blissful session was 'just what the doctor ordered'."

"...enjoying the meditation classes and in particular today's Metta Kindness. I felt I was less distracted and really enjoyed the process including the preparation."

"I am enjoying 'Morning Meditations' more than ever and like to think I am getting better at it. It's a great way to keep warm in the morning."

"I enjoy your meditations and appreciate the opportunity to meditate daily as a group. Thank you for your class."

"The sessions... are clearly making a big positive impact on our lives, especially in the current uncertain times."

We continue every weekday through to just before Christmas and resume in early January. Come any or all days. Enrol online (Morning Meditation), email baysideu3a@gmail.com or leave a message on **0404 524 028**

Nancy Jones is a member of Creative Conversations. This is her story...

I trained with Red Cross handcraft course at the Caulfield Hospital in 1963. I was chosen by the referrals of people who knew me well. Only eight girls trained for one year. I started in January 1963. After Red Cross received my good referrals, which I still have to this day, we were called 'Recreation Activities Officers' (Handicraft Instructors) and we wore the Red Cross uniform.

In 1976 The Diversional Therapy Association of Australia formed. After students completed undertaking the last Red Cross Handicraft Course, the name was changed to become Diversional Therapy. We were employed in nursing homes, private hospitals, public hospitals, rehabilitation units, psychiatric units, day care and community centres, hostel and retirement villages.

The Red Cross was born days after WWI broke out in 1914. It was led by the Governor General's wife, Lady Helen Munro Ferguson and has been committed to being there for Australia in times of crisis, big or small, to this day. After a year training course, I went to work in various places. TPI (Totally & Permanently Incapacitated Veterans) centres in East Melbourne, Montifiore Homes for Aged Jewish people in St. Kilda and the Adult Deaf Society centre in Blackburn, now called Able. Around the same time, I met my husband to be and we were married in 1965. I continued working in TPI in East Melbourne driving from Mt Waverley, where we built our first home in 1967.

We started a family and I resigned from the Red Cross. After three children and the youngest had started school, I got a job at the Dandenong Day Centre. We had moved to Wheelers Hill by this time. I worked at the Day Centre for thirteen years, teaching craft to people who came in from their homes on Council buses.



Changes were taking place and I had to leave there in 1989. Whilst I was working at the Salvation Army in Blackburn, I trained for two years through workshops to become a Diversional Therapist. These were great years and there were lots of changes with work. Not so much craft, no basket weaving, weaving or leather work. Salvation Army had minibuses and we would venture out on Wednesdays. They all loved these outings.

In my latter years I worked at Rosehill Nursing Home for very high care in Highett. My lovely Golden Retriever dog, Mollie, came along with me and was so very much enjoyed by all. Following my retirement, my mother-in-law, at 98 years and still in good health, wanted to go into care. I got her into Regis Aged Care in Sandringham. I was asked by the Activity Co-ordinator there, to do voluntary work. I organised a group and called it 'Cuppa and Chat'. We would talk about special events and days and have a quiz.

The Activity Co-ordinator put my story into Head Quarters in 2013. The result of which was, I was awarded \$2,000, selected from others all over Australia. I was very honoured to receive this award.

In this edition of the Bayside U3A newsletter, we feature another outstanding member of our volunteer team.

MEET DAVID HONE – BAYSIDE U3A VOLUNTEER OF LONG STANDING AND EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE

When it comes to volunteering at Bayside U3A, there's none more dedicated than David Hone.



David has been a part of Bayside U3A since its inception, firstly as a member of the 20 strong steering committee when it was founded in 2012 and its inaugural President.

Since then, David has remained involved in Bayside U3A's management and programs, serving as President from 2012 to 2017 and he remains on the Committee of Management as the immediate Past President.

David was raised in Melbourne and is an Honours History Graduate of Monash University. He has spent over 40 years in secondary education as a senior history teacher and as an educational administrator, including Headmaster of two independent schools. David has also completed post-graduate studies in education at Oxford and Monash University.

However, David's true passion is history. When David married Di, they spent their honeymoon in Greece - his interest in Ancient Athens drew them here. In 1970, they lived in the United Kingdom for a year while David attended Oxford University. It was there that David briefly played first class cricket for Oxford University and where he earned his name in cricket's 'bible' - the Wisden Cricket Almanac.

In 1969, prior to travelling to the UK, David played AFL football for Melbourne in what was then the VFL. On his return, he resumed playing for Melbourne but an injury put an end to his footy career. David describes himself as a 'keen golfer' - in fact, he's a member of Royal Melbourne and says, "That's why we bought our house here, to be close to the golf course!"

For many years now, David has tutored at Bayside U3A on various periods of history including Classical Athens, the American, French, Russian and Chinese Revolutions. At present, he is running three Zoom tutoring sessions per week, one on the *Birth of a New Republic – Reconstruction to World Power in the US from 1865 to 1950*, *Modern China* and *Australian Modern History from 1870 to post WW1*.

David has established a comprehensive blog on a range of history subjects. It is a valuable resource for discussion on historical matters, especially his U3A students, where they can find links to relevant websites and references to books. It also encourages his students to discuss topics and ask questions.

He believes that history should be of interest to all and that it should be written and presented in a manner that is accessible to the public. He admires the World at War and Liberty videos as great history and entertainment resources.

David and Di have two children: their son Will teaches at Camberwell Grammar and daughter Penny, works for the Treasury Department in Hobart. They also have two grandchildren. Di took up painting while being a palliative care nurse and has continued this into her retirement. Her painting of Bayside Brighton is on the Bayside U3A brochure and website. It has become synonymous with Bayside U3A. She also runs art classes the U3A.

David is a 50 years member of the MCC which awards him some small privileges when he attends a game at the MCG. As one would expect from an ex-player, he is one of those 'long-suffering' Melbourne supporters who dreams of seeing the Dees win a premiership.

He is keeping everything crossed that in 2021, the Dees bring home the flag!



WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN OUR TUTORS?



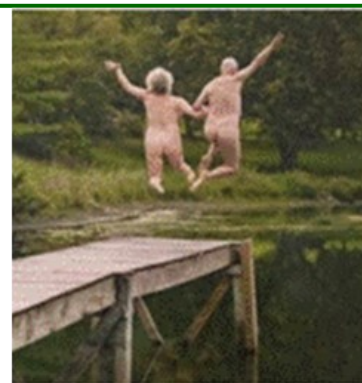
Do you have a skill, talent or interest that could translate to joining the Bayside U3A tutors' team? Perhaps you know someone who might enjoy being involved.

With the end of the year fast approaching, we're putting together next year's program of educational and social activities.

You might like to host a book club, teach a language, give lectures in the arts, history, science, music or fashion. The broader the range of topics and interests we can cover, the more our members will benefit.

Now is the time to give it some thought and let us know by contacting Course Convenor Sue Steele at baysideu3a@gmail.com or leave a message on **0404 524 028**

I am a Seenager (Senior Teenager).
 I have everything that I wanted as a teenager, only 60 years later.
 I don't have to go to school or work.
 I get an allowance every month.
 I have my own pad.
 I don't have a curfew (except during COVID)
 I have a driver's licence and my own car.
 I have ID that gets me into bars and the grog shops.
 The people I hang around with are not scared of getting pregnant.
 And I don't have acne.
 Life is great!
 I have more friends I should send this to but right now, I can't remember their names.



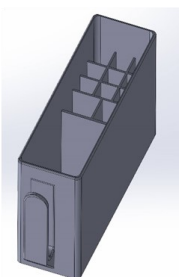
3D PRINTER HELPS KEEP THE KITCHEN TIDY

Dr Juan Solertron

We like to keep a shopping list going in the kitchen to help make replenishing the staple items a little more efficient. In order to facilitate this task, we always have a few pens lying around and some pieces of paper to jot down items to buy on the next supermarket visit. Another habit we keep is that of reusing the rubber bands that we bring home around that bunch of broccoli or spring onions. They come in handy for resealing frozen pea bags or block cheese or just about anything that is wrapped in a plastic bag.

So while I was looking at all these items lying around in a bowl interacting with each other rather like a bunch of six year old kids trying to play a soccer match, I hatched an idea. A couple of hours and a cup of tea later at my favourite 3D design application and out comes a design for an item to help improve the look of the kitchen by reducing some of the clutter. Well, at least that is how I justified the need to myself.

I am the cook of the house and spend a fair amount of time in the kitchen. Combine this with the fact that I am an uncontrollable neat freak with a 3D printer and you have a recipe for a continuous cavalcade of plastic pots, adapters, hooks, tidies and loads of other questionable inventions. But every now and then something works and that is what makes this endeavour so worthwhile.



To this end I present our kitchen pen/paper/rubber band tidy. The pictures show the design as created with the computer and the finished item.

We already have orders from 4 other members of the family and I will be uploading the design to thingiverse.com to share it with my community of fellow designers.



If you are interested in this technology and the art of 3D printing, please let us know by emailing baysideu3a@gmail.com or leaving a message on **0404 524 028**

THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD and STRESS RELIEF

Currently, due to COVID restrictions, our community and individuals are experiencing varying levels of stress. You may relate to some of the following.

WHAT IS STRESS?

- It is the physical response our body has to a perceived threat or a feeling of being unable to control a situation.
- The perception of stress is individual. One person may see a situation as a threat; another, an exciting challenge.
- Stress is not always negative. Often stress helps us perform better. Indeed, too much or too little stress tends to reduce performance.
- While we cannot take all the negative stress out of our lives, we do have ways of making changes to reduce the affects of the stressors.

SIGNS OF STRESS

1. Emotional stress - depression; anxiety; despair; mood swings; low self esteem; low self confidence; angry outbursts; an inability to feel pleasure.
2. Mental stress - loss of memory; lack of concentration; confusion; poor decision-making.
3. Physical stress - headaches, insomnia or an excessive need for sleep; weight loss or gain; loss of libido; clumsiness or aching muscles.
4. Social stress - withdrawal; isolation; loneliness.

SOME INVOLUNTARY RESPONSES OF THE BODY TO STRESS

The sympathetic nervous system accelerates its 'flight or fight' response to:

- increase heart rate and the volume of blood per beat - factor in high blood pressure or heart disease.
- channel blood to the areas of the body under muscular tension.
- enlarge pupils to make the eyes more sensitive - can lead to headaches.
- release adrenaline from the hypothalamus causing heart palpitations.

HOW CAN WE PRODUCE CHANGE?

This may seem difficult if we accept there are both voluntary and involuntary functions involved. However, the mind and body are one organism.

Our tension is often habitual and unconscious. How can we relax if we have no awareness of precisely which muscles are involved in our tension?

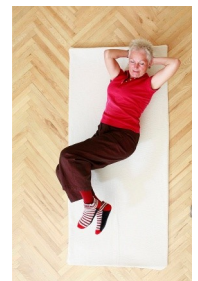
The body pattern formed under emotional stress, such as needing to appear a more satisfactory, desirable person, is often superimposed over our natural unconscious posture.

This causes continual low grade strain and nervous fatigue. We maintain this pattern without any question of its validity. Then the emotional pattern is sustained by the body - a continuous circular situation.

THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD

The Method teaches awareness of involuntary tension and show options for changing the unconscious tension.

Very small movements are used so the students can learn to distinguish the slightest variations in muscular effort. For example, if we lift a heavy weight, we cannot tell whether or not a sheet of paper is attached to it. However, on lifting a single sheet of paper, we can determine easily whether or not another sheet of paper is attached.



In the U3A Feldenkrais classes, students are taken gently and slowly through a series of functional movements to gain an understanding of what they can do voluntarily and what they are doing involuntarily or unconsciously. A finer discrimination of their own muscular contractions is learned and the emotional state concurrently involved, observed. Then they discover the opportunity to change it.

Changing the pattern of a daily function to a more efficient, less taxing one, has an impact on our emotional state, leading to a greater feeling of wellbeing and a reduction of the effects of stress, possible injury and illness. Don't wait until something major happens. Do something now to learn to manage your unnecessary habits and gain strategies to change negative stress to positive stress.

Marie Arendsen
Physiotherapist & Feldenkrais Practitioner - Retired

BAYSIDE U3A WRITERS GROUP**Tutor: Cheryl Threadgold**

Members of the Bayside U3A Writers Group are deeply saddened by news of the loss of our friend and fellow writer Sue Hardiman. We send our deepest condolences to her family and friends and a compilation of Sue's wonderful stories is being prepared, for forwarding to her extended family. Sue's final story, using the August word-of-the-month 'surprise', heads the Bayside U3A Writers Group contributions for this newsletter edition.

Vale Sue Hardiman

SURPRISE by Sue Hardiman

1st April 1981

Going out for dinner with friends is usually a very nice way to spend an evening and problem solving the world is always part of our dinners. Politics, religion and work all come in for heavy discussion and as the wine slips down we seem to become more intelligent and witty. Dining with a male friend is different, the conversation more general with work taking up a small part of the evening.

A phone call inviting me to dine next week was met with inner excitement. The restaurant was one of my favourites, The Great Australian Bite in North Melbourne at 7pm next Wednesday, 1st April. The next few days deciding what frock I would wear, shoes to go with it and finally decided on my T-Shirt long frock as I didn't want to look too formal. Wednesday came and I rushed home from work, a quick shower, on with my frock, jewellery, make-up, into a taxi and yes, I arrived on time. Ran up the stairs to the small dining room and to my surprise the room was set for 10 people, some of the guests already seated chatting nervously. The waiters had been 'worded up' and pre-dinner drinks were served. Seven of the guests were women. Six of the women had not met prior to this dinner, I knew them all. There was an empty seat at the table and to this day I do not know who that seat was for, but I do know that it had the guests worried.

Each guest thought she was dining alone with the host and each guest was more than surprised when they entered the room and realised that dinner for two was in fact dinner for 10. At 7.30 our host arrived with his guest. The guest was surprised, he too thought dinner was for two – the host and himself.

In a most gentlemanly manner he moved around the table greeting each guest and enquiring about their well-being. One of the women, a well-known author, had flown from Canberra for the dinner and was flying back to Canberra early next morning, no doubt with stories to tell of this dinner.

Drinks were ordered, menus handed around and the normal discussions of who was eating what, the 'administrative' bit done. Reflecting on the evening and the surprise of the dinner guests, especially the gentleman, it was a most agreeable and fun evening.

SURPRISE by Gwen McCallum

Was that a look of surprise
on Scarlett's face
when Rhett dropped that bomb?
In the background
a grand staircase
sumptuous velvet curtains-
a cliché now.
A woman spoilt by
a besotted indulgent lover
pushed her luck till the day
it ran out.

Outside the mansion
boys in ragged grey make their way
south. The war over.
She suffered too
you don't lose a child
and remain untouched,
neither he.
The sherry bottle ,
the satin gowns
may not suffice,
she is bound to always hear those final words
Frankly my dear I don't give a damn.

JEEPERS CREEPERS!

by Vicki Endrody

I'll never forget watching *Psycho*: it was shocking, I felt so surprised;
That frenzied shower scene stabbing - left me gasping and traumatised.

Marion Crane was the glamorous victim: a secretary who'd made a bad call;
Instructed to bank a cool forty thousand bucks, she impulsively absconded with all.

She floored it for California, to reunite with her honey named Sam;
With plenty of dough they could marry; but right now she was on the lam.

After driving through rain, feeling anxious and pooped, Marion found a motel for the night;
Norman Bates, the proprietor, was polite but on edge...something just didn't seem right!

Chowing down on sandwiches together, Bates spilled the beans on a difficult life;
His mother was possessive and demanding: she didn't approve of him taking a wife.

Marion could see how Norman felt trapped: he had trouble all over his face;
Her advice was to shake off his mother and make haste from this desolate place.

When back in her room, Marion took stock: this money was causing her grief;
She had to return it, she'd set out at dawn... then finally there'd be some relief.

With plans now in place, Marion hopped in the shower, after that she would go straight to bed;
But there's something amiss, it just doesn't make sense: the drain water's suddenly... red?

This scene was so chilling, so hard to forget: the stuff of your very worst dreams;
A knife-wielding woman stabs over and over, violins screeching to mimic the screams.

There's far more to tell but I'll heed Hitchcock's advice - not revealing the twist at the end.
If you've never seen *Psycho*, the movie, before ... you're in for a surprise, my fine friend!

AN EARLY MORNING SWIM

by Gwen Zammit

It's dark when Saint-Saens' *The Swan*, gently gliding through serene water, feet paddling busily underneath, rouses me from deep sleep. Ah yes, a swimming morning! Definitely need to get straight up.

My bathers are on and bag packed within minutes, ready for the short drive to the beach and rendezvous with my buddy. The car park is high above the beach allowing a glimpse of the water. A grey expanse topped by wind-driven white-topped waves is not encouraging, but today there is the same calm and serenity I awoke to. Gentle ripples bring the waves to shore, the Bay is topped only by the pink of the approaching dawn.

Greeting my buddy, we walk down the ramp to the beach. A quick chat while we don caps and goggles and into the water. She plunges in and swims straight off but I enter slowly, splash water on my bare arms, chest and face before lowering myself down. I start with a few of those undemanding head- above-water breast strokes from my English childhood before taking the next step, the hardest part. My face has to go down into that water. Just a quick dip at first, take a look at the sea floor and straight back up. If the water is clear, I feel a quiet thrill. This other noiseless, peaceful underwater world is welcoming me back. Soon I'll be part of it.

Down goes the rest of my face and I start slow freestyle strokes; one, two, three, breathe and relax. I count my sets knowing that once I hit thirty, something mysterious happens; just in one sudden moment my breathing relaxes, my limbs free up and the burn on my skin dissipates. That's when the fun starts. Now I have true power in my limbs, regularity in my strokes and good strong breaths to sustain me. I can really take off, feeling free, strong, joyous, in the moment. I recognise signposts on the sea floor like old friends; the stumps of an old breakwater, a ring of rocks signalling the large rocks further on. Soon it will be time to perform a semi-circle and return to base. I float for a while, face down arms and legs outstretched, loving how my body remains my friend; still strong, still up for a challenge. I feel elated but know this feeling needs limits, best get going again. Euphoria is a danger signal. Back in the car, I wait for my body to settle, a flask in my hands. My lips are numb and my fingers white. I spill water as I drink. I turn the heating up and settle a bit longer. It's dangerous to drive off too soon; can be more dangerous than driving when drunk. That surprises you maybe? She only went for a swim, you think. Did I not mention? This is mid-winter. The water is under 10 degrees. This is my addiction, my release, my re-set button.

A shame I only discovered it in retirement!

SURPRISE

by Joy Meekings

A single rose left at my gate
I have an admirer, must be fate
Conjure him up in my mind's eye
Am so excited begin to cry!
He'll be my saviour and perfect match
Then reality bites, is there a catch?

The very next day a note is left
It leaves me feeling quite bereft
"The rose I left here yesterday
Was not for you, I'm ashamed to say
Meant for my gran, who lives next door
So very sorry, but that's the score"
But it was nice just for one day
To think Mr Darcy was heading my way!

Dejeuner sur l'herbes*(Lunch on the Grass)

by Juliet Charles

12 Octobre, 1863

Ma chère Lisette

Tut alors! What a fuss! So, mon ami, you have heard about Édouard's 'wicked' painting – '*Dejeuner sur l'herbes*'! Une grande scandale!

Pauvre Édouard! His painting was refused by the *Academie of Beaux-Arts*. It hangs in the *Salon des Refuses*. Bon fortune that Napoleon established this *Salon*, where Édouard – and other artists whose works have been rejected, may exhibit their paintings!

Why do people think the painting is 'indecent and vulgar'? Well, they see two clothed, obviously wealthy men - 'cavorting' with a nude, clearly working-class woman, who 'must be a prostitute' – in the *Bois de Boulogne*. What nonsense! Firstly, that woman, I, Victorine Meurent, is not, as you well know, a prostitute. And secondly, I am not 'cavorting' but *sitting* on the grass. Some say it appears they've all just had sex – they haven't touched their picnic lunch! Mon Dieu! Everyone seems to have a violent reaction, one way or the other. One day Lisette, I hid behind a pillar in the *Salon* to watch people's reactions. I saw a gentleman rush his wife and children past the painting. Then, a little later, he crept back to gaze alone. Shockingly, one man hit the painting with his stick! Tres amusant, non? Others have simply laughed. Perhaps more insulting? Did you know it was painted entirely in the studio? Non, non Lisette – I did not really sit in the park naked and expose to all passersby!

Ah oui – the critics! Louis Etienne called it 'a puzzle ... the model, as nude as possible, lolling boldly between two swells dressed to the teeth...' Didier de Montchaux called it 'fairly scabrous' and Thoré thinks the nude is 'ugly and risqué'. Vraiment! Arthur Stevens from *Figaro* disliked the 'lack of form and modelling'. But believe me Lisette, the name of **Édouard Manet**, will one day be very famous.

I met Eduoard when I was carrying my guitar to a lesson and he asked if he could sketch me. The painting – *The Street Singer* was completed in his studio. That was my first modelling assignment, three years ago, when I was 16. Édouard liked my flaming red hair and was the first to nickname me 'La Crevette' because of my size. Poof! Shrimp indeed! Our backgrounds are very different. My parents are artisans while Édouard comes from an aristocratic family. But he is always a perfect gentleman and devoted to his wife, Suzanne. She is the lady in the background of *Dejeuner*, emerging from the lake. Édouard has painted me many times. *Olympia* caused a similar scandal! But I pose also for Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Edgar Degas and others. The money is not much, but I also teach violin and guitar, so I am able to pay for my painting lessons. In this way, Édouard and I are similar. He had to fight to be allowed to study painting, and I am just as passionate about my art. My ambition is to be exhibited at the *Academie*.

How do I feel about modelling in the nude? I am not ashamed of the body which God has given me. Édouard decides on his subject and the public and critics may interpret as they choose. I do not care a fig.

I must close now, dear Lisette. You and I both know I am a respectable woman. Please reassure Maman when you see her. History will judge both the painting and me. But it may always arouse curiosity and speculation!

Au revoir

Your affectionate Victorine.**



Dejeuner sur l'herbe, Edouard Manet, 1863

**Dejeuner sur l'herbe*, by Édouard Manet, 1863

**Victorine Meurent became a successful painter who regularly exhibited at the *Paris Salon*. In 1876 she was selected for the *Salon's* exhibition, when Manet's work was not.