

## Wanted: Convenors

Our U3A is growing at a fast rate. We need more courses to keep pace with this growth. Many existing courses are full or near-full. Where will the new courses come from?

Let us remember one of the basic principles of the U3A movement. It is a self-help organisation, a movement run completely by volunteers. And its courses work on the principle that the teachers learn and the learners teach.

Many of our members cannot see themselves as teachers. One answer to this concern is to think of convening not as something you have to give single-handedly, but something you can lead or organise. You don't have to do it all alone. We already have many courses which are examples of this approach: Current affairs discussion groups, Australian History in part at least, Destinations, Telling Your Own Story groups, two music courses all work more or less in this way.

Think of a field of knowledge or skill or activity about which you have an interest or a modicum of experience or knowledge and

think how you could build it into a course.

Fields which lend themselves to discussion and interactive type groups include current affairs or aspects thereof; reading, whether novels, non-fiction, family history, biographies, magazines or even newspapers; music; favourite performers; art; TV and movies; places (Australian towns for example); hobbies; recipes; and so on.

Frame your offering so that members realise they will need to contribute in some form and so that it will sound interesting and rewarding to others who share the particular interest. Ask current experienced convenors or Course Coordinator Ursula Bruce for help in planning and preparing your course. Do you need to learn PowerPoint and how to use our equipment? It can be arranged.

Gather some friends or like minded people and work as a team. Advertise on our web site for partners. Nick Ogbourne will help you with that.

Convening a course as in making a presentation requires some work, some research and a little bravery but it can be hugely satisfying. Have a Go! ■

## Bessie Jennings, –Tutor 'Improve your writing'

Born in Wauchope in 1930, Bessie's education (which she says hasn't finished yet) began in Nabic watching the bullocky etc. Schooling began in Sydney's west, continued at Fort St (Sydney) during WW2, then Sydney Uni and Balmain Teachers' College.



Bessie Jennings

She taught in public schools (including a migrant camp in Bathurst), married a timber cutter and lived on the edge of Jenolan State Forest, later moving to the NSW north coast growing bananas. She was widowed in her 30s with four young children and then worked in shire and school libraries.

With her 2<sup>nd</sup> husband Bessie moved to Port Macquarie, and trained as a Parent Educator, ran S.T.E.P. (Parenting) courses for 10 years; took courses ranging from Assertiveness Training and Conflict Resolution to Face-to-face Relationship Counselling and was a Lifeline Counsellor for 18 years.

Bessie was involved for many years with the Mental Health community, especially through GROW, consequent to her own experience of depression and her first husband's mental illness. She advocates the 12 Steps of AA and other Fellowships and is involved with a support group, plus the Uniting Church and its choir.

Widowed a second time, she is now happily married to Frank (who lived as a boarder with her family in 1947-8) and shares his commitment to U3A.

Bessie is an active member of the Fellowship of Australian Writers and Australian Bush Poetry Association. She says all her career dreams have materialised – teaching, library work, counselling and writing. She has self-published her father's biography '*Herman*', a CD of her Bush Poetry and four books of verse.

With various awards for Bush Poetry (in both written and performance comps) Bessie plans to compete this year in the national Championship in Bundaberg. ■

## U3A Centre News

**Sound System donation** — Mrs Irene Dall kindly donated a massive sound system now located in Room 2. The equipment, worth thousands of dollars, includes twin turntables, graphic equaliser, CD, tape deck and twin large speakers. It was the loved hobby of her late husband. Thank you very much, Irene, for the generosity. The music appreciation groups will put it to good use. Beware the Friday morning group that Ursula runs; I'm informed they like it loud and heavy. Rock on Urs.

**Security** — We have recently received episodes of Saturday night vandalism. It is being responded to. We've enabled the security system the church provided us. Other deterrents have been implemented. The total cost is less than \$400 at this stage. We hope the kids are sufficiently deterred to move on. We will continue to be reactive but are mindful of the limited funds we have. In the June meeting the committee will consider other measures for Community Programs Grant funding we might acquire in September. ■

## June 8th Excursion

On **Tuesday June 8th** our excursion will take us south to the Forster area where we'll enjoy a home cooked morning tea, some sight-seeing and a shopping opportunity at Aldi's. **Cost is \$25** for the bus and lunch at your own expense. **Register and pay at the U3A Centre office. The bus will pick us up at Emerald Downs shopping centre near the Tavern at 9.00am.** The bus will only hold 21 so get in early! ■

## Volunteers needed!

Our U3A is a volunteer run organisation and we are always looking for volunteers. We have set up a volunteer register in the office. If you would like to be on it please contact the office. Our two main areas of need are 1) manning the office which means primarily answering enquiries and taking enrolments and registrations; and 2) special events such as enrolment days which means setting up, clearing up afterwards and manning the tables for registrations. Join the team! ■

## My Word

At the start of this year Laurie Barber, the guest speaker at a gathering of U3A coordinators, said his book, *My Word*, would be released soon. The release date has now been set in May. You can buy it at book stores, on the website at [sidharta.com.au](http://sidharta.com.au) or by contacting Laurie. The price is \$24.95. *My Word* will also be available at the U3A office from May 29. Congratulations, Laurie. ■

## April Open Day

U3A members Joan Loerch, Patricia White and Pat Edwards fascinated us all with their life experiences, of particular note was Pat Edwards' challenging role as an Australian woman commissioned to set up a rehab hospital in Saudi Arabia. ■



*l-r clockwise from top left: Joan Loerch, Patricia White, Pat Edwards. Below: Members listening intently.*



## U3A OFFICE HOURS

**CLOSED**

**Monday 21 June – 9 July 2010**

**RE-OPENING**

**Monday 12 July 2010**

**9.30am – 12 noon**

**Monday – Friday**

**Phone: 6584-3676**

**Web site: [www.pmhu3a.org.au](http://www.pmhu3a.org.au)**

The U3A office will be closed from June 21 – July 9 to give volunteers a break, re-opening Monday July 12, 2010.

Payment of joining fees for new members and Enrolments will be taken from July 12 up to Enrolment Day on July 20.

If undelivered return to:

**Port Macquarie Hastings U3A Inc**  
**PO Box 1210**  
**Port Macquarie**  
**NSW 2444**

**SURFACE  
MAIL**

### Patron – Robert Oakeshott MP

#### President

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Kevin Pike 6583 7720

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#### Course Coordinator

Ursula Bruce 6583 8030

#### Publicity Officer

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#### Newsletter Publisher

Sue Clifford 6582 0424

#### Webmaster

Nick Ogbourne 6586 1627

[www.pmhu3a.org.au](http://www.pmhu3a.org.au)

**NEXT ENROLMENT DAY – 20 July 2010**  
**1.30 – 2.30pm at the U3A Centre, Warlters Street.**

**LATE ENROLMENT up to 3 weeks after the start of a course are welcome in many courses.** You **MUST** contact the Course Convenor first to ascertain if additional members are being accepted.

For late enrolment, you pay only for the rest of the term. Pay at the office or post your remittance to the Treasurer with a covering note and initial the attendance form to show you have paid. If less than \$5 is owed, postage stamps will be accepted as payment. Names cannot be entered on the Attendance Sheet unless accommodation fees have been paid. Money **CANNOT** be paid to the Course Convenor during the term.

**NAME BADGES – ALWAYS wear your name badge when attending classes and U3A activities.** Write your emergency contact details on the back of your badge.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR EMAIL** – Please inform the Office on 6584 3676 if you move house or change your email address.

**NEWSLETTER contributions are welcome** – We reserve the right to edit material submitted for publication. Copyright of original material remains with the author.

**PHOTOGRAPHS AND PRIVACY** – If you have an objection to having your photograph in the on-line gallery (or in our Newsletter), please write to the Secretary and make this fact known. We will always respect your privacy but must first be aware of your need.

**DISCLAIMER** – Opinions expressed here or in PMHU3A activities are not necessarily those of PMHU3A or its officers. PMHU3A accepts no responsibility for statements or opinions expressed. PMHU3A offers courses that provide general information for its members. PMHU3A does not warrant that such information is true and correct.