



Options considered for other course types

The series 1 courses are now well under way and we move onto the second Series starting in June. The ballot for the first series worked well. With a reduced offering for the second series it is even more important that two preferences are given when you return your forms.

The Board is considering the role that short courses and web courses can play in the future as we expand our membership. A report on these options should be ready for the next newsletter and will be discussed at the AGM.

As members will be aware this is the 20th anniversary of U3A Dunedin and the special edition of the newsletter giving a historical perspective is being prepared.

The success of the Dunedin branch has been through the hard work and vision of a number of enthusiastic members. The Board has decided to create a new category of membership – Honorary Life Member – which will be awarded to those members who have given outstanding and long contributions to U3A Dunedin. The Board will be nominating the first Honorary Life Members for approval at the AGM in July.

Chairman's message



By Brian Robinson
 Chair, U3A Dunedin

Our U3A branch has been fortunate in having a strong relationship with the University, cemented in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). With the removal of Government funding for community education it was no longer appropriate to have a MOA, or the Director of Continuing Education as a permanent member of the Board, or for the University to contribute to our printing costs.

Because the courses will not be approved by the University we cannot use the University logo on our material.

Still a big waiting list

Jane Higham, Membership Secretary, reported to the Board in early March that our membership roll stood at 597 people, with a waiting list of 196.

- *Different types of courses pondered*
- *New honorary life members planned*
- *Changed relationship with University*

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 However, the Board is pleased to inform members that after discussion the University has agreed to appoint a representative to the Board and we foresee the continuance of a strong relationship with the University. All printing costs will now be covered by U3A.

I would remind members of the AGM on July 3. This is an opportunity for members to provide ideas, discuss possible changes to our operation and approve our financial reports and fee structure, as well as having a good lunch! Nominations for the Board must be in writing to the Secretary two weeks before the meeting.

## Wikimedia - like U3A?

The Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. ([www.wikimedia.org](http://www.wikimedia.org)) is a non-profit charitable organisation dedicated to encouraging the growth, development and distribution of free, multilingual, educational content, and to providing the full information to the public free of charge. It is run by volunteers and is remarkably like the University of the Third Age in its aims, philosophy and administration.

The Foundation operates some of the largest collaboratively edited reference projects in the world, including Wikipedia, a top-10 internet property.

## *Post-haste action again please*

Please post your application forms for the second term's courses smartly! Bear in mind that in the worst scenario there is, due to changes at New Zealand Post, a pessimistic timeframe of local mail taking up to three days to be delivered.

Your applications need to be posted much earlier than in the past in order to arrive at Rodgers Law by noon on Wednesday, 14 May. So to be safe, you should post no later than Friday, 9 May.

# Enthusiasms and hot topics in coming courses

The Winter Series will have five courses from which to choose. Our appeal for members to offer to share their talents or hobbies with other members, has resulted in a course called *Members' Enthusiasms*. The Programme Committee believe that this will be a popular course and hope it will encourage others to also volunteer, so that we can organise another one like this in a year or two.

There will be another *Hot Topics* course, this time about current research at Otago, a course from the Department of Media, Film and Communication and one on *Literary Themes*.

To commemorate the centennial of the start of World War 1, there will be

## LOOKING AHEAD



Sue Cathro

Programme Coordinator

a course named *The Bitter Truth – The Effects of the Great War and its Aftermath on the Arts*.

Looking ahead to spring, we have

four courses confirmed already, *Victorians in Dunedin*, *Don Juan*, *Mozart in Vienna* and *Information Assurance and our Internet Use*.

Another is being worked on, and we are looking for a sixth to make up the series.

We welcome any suggestions. The course evaluation forms are a good source of your thoughts, but if you have an idea at any time and a possible presenter, please contact a Board member so that he/she can bring it to our meetings. Just a reminder about making sure that applications are posted to Rodgers Law in plenty of time to meet the deadline — they must be received by 12 noon on Wednesday 14 May.

# Judith Cowley: from teacher to mediator services

A Board member for U3A Dunedin since 2007, Judith Cowley was born in the Isle of Man, She graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, with an honours degree in Modern Languages and Literature.

An academic future beckoned but the lure of adventure was greater. So, impulsively, she went to teach at Ankara College, Turkey, before that country opened up to tourism. She gained a fascination with the Middle East, travelling throughout Turkey, Syria and the Lebanon.

After three years Judith went to London, married and came out to New Zealand where she lectured at Ardmore Teachers' College until its closure in 1974.

After the birth of a daughter she taught English as a foreign language at Aorere College, an innovative

## U3A PROFILE



Judith Cowley

school which provided child care on site to staff and adult students.

Several years of teaching followed, one as a VSA in Tonga, until she had the chance of complete change by joining the Probation Service, where she was exposed to gangs, drugs

and violence for the first time while working in Otago. During this time she gained social work qualifications and a Diploma in Applied Research, focusing on families dealing with schizophrenia..

Another change came about in 1990 when she trained as a mediator and was appointed as a Disputes Tribunal referee based in Otago, a multi-cultural area where a hearing was sometimes conducted through two interpreters!

The south beckoned so Judith settled in Dunedin in 2000. She undertook several kinds of self-employment as a restorative justice co-ordinator, a careers guidance counsellor, alcohol and drug counsellor and, until 2011, a stopping violence coordinator.

Some of her interests are: "travel, film, theatre, classical music, singing, other cultures, reading and writing poetry, food, wine and laughter."

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## Cheque refunds

Refunds of cheque money to members unsuccessful in the ballot for courses has to be a slow process and it is hard to speed up.

Rodgers Law explain that they do not bank members' cheques immediately since they get a number of people wanting to change. Then they are written up on banking schedules, done in batches at the request of the bank to avoid hold-ups in its systems. The office then has to wait three days, as occasionally a cheque bounces. After the appropriate lapse of time the latest refunds were all processed and posted out.

# Battling influenza - don't forget that flu jab

Have you visited your doc for this year's flu jab? This immunisation is free to over-65's — many U3A members are in this category. The vaccinations are not effective for more than a year, and the sooner you get the 2014 version the better protection you will have.

Eligible people get a free flu shot from their General Practice, and usually the practice nurse administers the vaccine, that is injected into the upper arm.

'The vaccine is the best defence against flu and serious flu-related conditions, and because it's difficult to predict how and when the flu will strike, I recommend getting it as early as you can,' Dr Teresa Seville, Infectious Diseases, Mayo Clinic in Arizona, told Americans last October (the beginning of a bad flu season in the northern hemisphere.)

It takes around two weeks to develop immunity once vaccinated. Ideally, immunisation should be carried out before the main influenza activity in May to September for New Zealand. People can be immunised at any time during the influenza season, but the vaccine is only free for those in the high-risk groups until the end of July. Each year flu can be caused by different strains of influenza viruses that are not represented in the previous year's vaccine.

Approximately 400 deaths each year in New Zealand are related to influenza infection. A recent radio programme reminded us that 8,600 lives were lost in two months in New Zealand's 1918 epidemic and there were 25 to 50 million estimated dead in the world-wide pandemic after World War 1 (where war fatalities numbered 10 million.)

Influenza spreads very easily and up to one in five of us come in contact with influenza every year, states [www.fightflu.co.nz](http://www.fightflu.co.nz).

At its worst, influenza can put you in hospital and can even be fatal. In many cases, influenza can keep you in bed for a week or two, and drain your energy keeping you from work, sport or just about anything that requires leaving the house.

For adults and children with long-term health conditions, pregnant women



and people aged 65 years and older, influenza can be an especially serious illness. For this reason the influenza immunisation is provided free to these groups.

While general health affects the severity of an infection, the influenza virus is contagious and anyone can become infected.

## *Getting rid of these myths*

Many myths are still keeping people from doing more to prevent flu. Mayo Clinic infectious diseases and vaccine expert Dr Gregory Poland, professor of medicine and director of the Vaccine Research Group at the Mayo Clinic in the US, dispels some of the most common:

### **Myth No. 1: Flu vaccines can give me the flu.**

False. Injectable flu vaccines are composed of pieces of inactivated flu proteins -- and it is impossible for them to 'cause' flu.

### **Myth No. 2: Flu shots never work anyway, so why bother?**

Also false. When there is a good match between the viruses causing disease and those in the vaccine, protection is excellent in otherwise healthy people. Protection is lower if you are unhealthy or in the frail elderly group.

### **Myth No.3: Flu vaccines are dangerous, especially for pregnant women.**

Also false. Concerns about pregnant women getting vaccinated began when women were advised not to get any kind of vaccination during pregnancy. Today's flu vaccines are safe for expectant mothers and highly recommended. A recent large study demonstrated significant increases in maternal death among unvaccinated women infected with influenza.

### **Myth No. 4: It's too late to get vaccinated.**

Again, false. While it is always better

Influenza is more than just a 'bad cold'. Although some of the symptoms are the same, influenza is usually much more severe. Symptoms of influenza include a cough, headache, fever or chills, body aches and pains, fatigue and generally feeling miserable.

A record 1.25 million doses of vaccine were distributed in New Zealand in 2013, so one hopes the message is spreading.

Medical scientists in both Christchurch and Auckland are researching different aspects of influenza.

[Sources: Mayo Clinic, [www.influenza.org.nz](http://www.influenza.org.nz), [www.flu.co.nz](http://www.flu.co.nz).]

to get vaccinated before flu season begins -- it can take about two weeks for the vaccination to take full effect -- it's never too late to get a flu vaccine. Even if you didn't get vaccinated and caught the flu, get a flu vaccine to protect yourself against the other strains that are circulating, Dr. Poland says.

### **Myth No. 5: It's just the flu. What's the big deal?**

Once again, false. While it might be 'just' the flu, Dr. Poland says we should still be concerned, regardless of our age or physical condition.

'No one should confuse influenza with a "minor illness." Serious complications and death result every year due to flu. Vaccines, while imperfect, offer the best protection available for you and your family, as well as others you come in contact with.'

**Footnote:** Please read but forget these myths, since research suggests that people tend to remember such false words better than the true answers! But if you remember the answers please debunk delusions of others — myth No.3 is unlikely to be relevant to our senior age group but we may be still able to urge family members regarding the need for flu vaccinations during pregnancies?

*'America is the only country where a significant proportion of the population believes that professional wrestling is real, but the moon landing was faked.'*  
~ David Letterman

# Untangling Alzheimer's

Plaques and tangles made of proteins are believed to contribute to the debilitating progression of Alzheimer's disease. But proteins also play a positive role in important brain functions, such as cell-to-cell communication and immunological response. Molecules that are called microRNAs regulate both good and bad protein levels in the brain, binding to messenger RNAs to prevent them from developing into proteins.

[RNA is ribonucleic acid, a nucleic acid present in all living cells. Its principal role is to act as a messenger carrying instructions from DNA for controlling the synthesis of proteins, although in some viruses RNA rather than DNA carries the genetic information.]

Last year Dr Boaz Barak and a team of researchers in the lab of Prof. Uri Ashery of Tel Aviv University's Department of Neurobiology identified a specific set of microRNAs that detrimentally regulate protein levels in the brains of mice with Alzheimer's disease and beneficially regulate protein levels in the brains of other mice living in a stimulating environment.

"We were able to create two lists of microRNAs -- those that contribute to brain performance and those that detract -- depending on their levels in the brain," said Dr Barak. "By targeting these molecules, we hope to move closer toward earlier detection and better treatment of Alzheimer's disease."

[Prof. Daniel Michaelson of TAU's Department of Neurobiology in the George S. Wise Faculty of Life Sciences and the Sagol School of Neuroscience, Dr Noam Shomron of TAU's Department of Cell and Developmental Biology and Sagol School of Neuroscience, Dr Eitan Okun of Bar-Ilan University (Israel) and Dr. Mark Mattson of the National Institute on Aging collaborated on the study, published in *Translational Psychiatry*.]

'Prose is architecture, not interior decoration.' ~ Ernest Hemingway

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## Politically incorrect — on ageing

Reporters interviewing a 104-year-old woman: 'And what do you think is the best thing about being 104?'

She simply replied, 'No peer pressure.'

A woman very quietly confided to her best friend that she was having an affair. The friend turned to her and asked, 'Are you having it catered?'

'I've sure got old! I've had two bypass surgeries, a hip replacement, new knees, fought prostate cancer and diabetes; I'm half blind, can't hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 40 different medications that make me dizzy, winded, and subject to blackouts; have bouts with dementia, poor circulation; I hardly feel my hands and feet anymore; can't remember if I'm 85 or 92 and have lost all my friends. But, thank heavens, I still have my driver's licence.'

### www, 25 years ago

March 12 1989 was the day on which the Worldwide Web was born, an event that has changed the world and how we see it in the intervening 25 years.

### Free ebooks on offer

Gizmo's Best Freeware, at [www.techsupportalert.com](http://www.techsupportalert.com) provides a listing of 913 sites that legally offer free books (eBooks) for download or for online viewing. You can easily check out this listing in alphabetical order via the index - [www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-ebooks-online.htm#Index](http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-ebooks-online.htm#Index)

### ... and other websites

[www.archaeolink.com/](http://www.archaeolink.com/) is designed to provide students and others interested in the fields of archaeology, anthropology, and ancient civilizations a one-stop resource for help or other projects.

<http://blogcritics.org/> is a worldwide online magazine and community of writers and readers. Also <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/getwriting/minicourse> is worth a look.

[www.epistemelinks.com/index.aspx](http://www.epistemelinks.com/index.aspx) includes over 19,000 categorised links to philosophy resources on the Internet and has several additional features. Online since early 1997, this site is free to use.

'My memory's not as sharp as it used to be.

'Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be.'

'I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape, so I got my doctor's permission to join a fitness club and start exercising. I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors.

'I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour... But, by the time I got my leotards on, the class was over.'

'A prayer: "Grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference."'

'Now, I think you're supposed to share this with five or six, maybe ten others. But heck, give it to a bunch of your friends, if you can remember who they are!'

Always remember this:

'You don't stop laughing because you grow old, You grow old because you stop laughing...'

### Austen's viewing

In May 1913 Jane Austen visited a retrospective exhibition of Sir Joshua Reynolds' paintings in a London gallery. Using copies of the catalogue and contemporary reports, the show has been reconstructed as Jane Austen saw it. Look at [www.whatjanesaw.org](http://www.whatjanesaw.org) where an e-gallery offers the modern visitor, two centuries later, an historical reconstruction of a long-lost Regency blockbuster.

### Grounds for argument?

The popular British magazine *Oldie* recently asked its readers if they had ever been bemused by the difference between an espresso and a macchiato — and didn't want to get started on flat whites and how they compare to americanos.

It gave a cheer to one firm that had launched a plain-English coffee menu in its department store cafes. Then it was goodbye cappuccino, hello 'frothy coffee.' Caffe latte was renamed 'really, really milky coffee'. And caffe mocha became 'chocolate-flavoured coffee.'

*I have kleptomania but when it gets bad I take something for it.*

~ Robert Benchley