

May mumblings from your president in isolation

Another week goes by as we travel this path to some sort of normal existence. I cannot wait.

It seems forever since I saw many of you in person in our wonderful facilities at Karingal Place. For me one of the worst parts of this isolation is the lack of choice – cannot choose to have a coffee with friends, cannot choose to go to the movies or wander around the shops. Worst of all, I am still being denied access to my dad. I really think I am a bit old to be developing patience to this degree, but it seems that I must. I hope you are all coping as well as possible too.

Your committee has moved rapidly on the Zoom licences and are working towards offering a greater range of classes online. I suspect this will continue for some time. I hope many of you are now getting the hang of this technology and are using it to maintain some form of human communication beyond texting and telephone. Our Facebook page is busy too – feel free to join in the conversations! We would like to encourage new members to join both U3A Frankston and some of our online classes – we are considering a reduced rate for them for the balance of the year and so pass the word along if you know of anyone interested.

April was an interesting month for us. It meant celebrating Easter in a curiously detached way and of course Anzac Day. It was a moving moment standing on my veranda at 6am with a candle in my hand listening to the moving speeches by our dignitaries. I was particularly moved when one of them recounted the story of a contemporary of my fathers – Mr Jessup, who lives in Mount Eliza and was a member of Dad's Probus club.

There have been other notable events in April – one of them the 94th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. You do not have to be a Royalist to acknowledge what a remarkable woman she is and how much strength she has displayed in the face of conflict and dealing with her recalcitrant children and grandchildren. She continues to be a role model to us all and a symbol of stability in an unstable world.

I realise that my next comments may seem controversial, but I must acknowledge the 250th anniversary of the arrival of Captain James Cook at Botany Bay. I know that it is no longer politically correct to talk about this, but I choose to. Cook came from Yorkshire, like me. He was an adventurer, a first-class navigator and an extraordinary human being who came from humble beginnings to rise to the top in the British Navy. I admire him enormously, not necessarily for all his actions, which were reflective of the society he came from, but for his tenacity, his singlemindedness and strength. We would do well to reflect on the extraordinary efforts made by him, his crew and the stubbornly ambitious Joseph Banks. Without them, I wonder where would Australia and all of us be now?

We are now moving into May. This is the last month of Autumn and it looks like we are going to have a cold winter ahead of us. It is therefore crucial that we look after ourselves and stay connected to those around us. Our mental health is going to take a beating – so we must start to take stock and take care.

Mother's Day is celebrated on 10th May and I pass on my best wishes to those of you who are mothers or who have mothers still living. As I am not a mother and my mother died 11 years ago, I do not celebrate the day. I have never felt the need to single out the day – I loved her as my mother 365 days a year, so a special day was not necessary. However, for those of you who do I wish you a

wonderful, caring day with one proviso. Practise social distancing, go easy on the chocolates and the alcohol and pray that 11th May (coincidentally my mothers birthday) will see a relaxation of some of the more onerous restrictions.

Until we meet again, I wish you health, happiness and humour

Best wishes

Andrea McCall

President, U3A Frankston

PS. May I urge as many of you as possible to ensure you have a flu jab soon and to download the COVIDSafe app. Together we can beat this thing sooner rather than later.