



U3A Vall del Pop News4U

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Dear Members,

A Happy New Year and welcome to 2014.

I hope that you all enjoyed the festive season. Already we have had our first committee meeting and General Meeting of 2014, and we are **preparing for the "Meet Your Committee" on Monday 13th January**, where it is an opportunity for those members who are interested in becoming more involved in the workings and operation of your U3A. We hope to see many of you at the Texas bar at 1.00 for a drink and a chat.

This is also the time of year when we attempt New Year resolutions, so why not decide to get more involved, maybe by joining one more group to develop a new interest. I know that many groups would really appreciate having new members to bring ideas and suggestions. It is also an ideal opportunity, considering we have over 50 groups, that you might like to become a group leader and start a new group. I can always suggest new groups! I often do at our meetings!

The committee is always ready to help support any new groups, by finding accommodation or funding. We are always willing to listen to any ideas and I know that the TCP Team hope you like **their new initiative of the new 'TCP Information News', where all the news is sent to you in one email.**

Lastly, can I on your behalf thank everyone who has worked so hard during 2013 to make our U3A so successful. Bring on 2014!

Best wishes, Bob



Happy New Year



From the Newsletter Team



VIVA! Casual Choir!!

Our U3A Casual Choir gave great performances at three events before Christmas, giving up their time to sing at a SCAN charity event in El Verger, to the old folk in Benimeli and supporting Jalón Valley Help singing round the Christmas tree in Jalón. Sandra Welham did a great job in Jalón, encouraging the audience to join in, even the Spanish locals were singing away from our English song-sheets. Special admiration for those choir members who, even though they preferred (or needed) to sit and sing, sat throughout and gave it their all. More pictures on the JVH website (you'll find it if you Google).



HARRY'S GOOD LUCK

Treasurer Jim Lockhart organised a free member's raffle at the Christmas meeting, - first prize 75€. Unfortunately the winner, Cecil Dean, is out of the country and kindly wrote to ask that the prize be re-drawn at the next meeting. Lucky for Harry Roskoss, our very hard-working Group Co-ordinator, who now holds the winning voucher!

MEMBERSHIP HIGHS!

Membership Secretary Maureen reports that 31 brand-new members joined us at the meeting in January - WELCOME, glad you could join us! That brings our membership to 955, provided all **last year's members renew for 2014.**

BUT SOMEONE clearly didn't like Maureen asking for the €5 to join!

(I'm assured that we DON'T have a criminal element within our ranks – it was none other than the kitchen workshop what done it!! A warning to us all – don't make your kitchen surfaces angry whatever the provocation! – Jazz.)



The Committee Apologises

SO MANY NEW MEMBERS - and how welcome they are! But sometimes we forget just how much our membership has grown this year.

We had a great Christmas meeting (it was fun, it was entertaining, it was free) but even we were taken aback by the size of the audience! We broke all records - and in doing so admit that we were a bit late in providing enough chairs for all those who wanted them. We must apologise for our tardiness. Enough chairs did come out later but perhaps too late for some members. Wrists firmly slapped and apologies to all those affected. We learn from those occasions where we could have done better, but we are only human (and volunteers too - come on!).

U3A Tennis Club Xmas lunch at Rafol Thursday 19th December

by **Lorraine Barker**

As usual for a Thursday, it rained us off the courts, so there was a mass exodus to La Marina shopping centre until midday when it was safe to return and get stuck into some Cava.

Speeches and general thanks from Rod were mercifully short, drowned out by clapping rather than hissing and booing which was a plus and made a nice change. The Turkey finally made an appearance, a strange cut, which suggested the bird had had several more legs than just two.



Home-made bread sauce and cranberry sauce brought by Elaine, saved the day, although Patrick, being a gourmand Frenchie, turned his nose up at jam with meat! His wife Socorro, from Columbia via Ireland, brought some tiny mince pies, sprinkled with icing sugar not any other kind of powder. Probably a good thing because our singing was threatening to drown out the gathering of Germans having their lunch on the ground floor.

They begged for silence while their speech was made (much longer than Rod's) and we all clapped and shouted **Wunderbar** as loud as possible.



I took the pics before things got too lively so we all look well-behaved and sober.

U3A PETANCA CHRISTMAS LUNCH



On Sunday 8th December, following their regular game of Petanca, 19 group members plus non-playing partners and guests gathered at the Hotel Serrella in Castells to enjoy a fabulous Christmas get together. Rosa, the Alcadesa of Castells and hotel owner, and her helpers served us with three tapas, soup, salad, main course and postre, with plenty of wine and water, which was then followed by coffee.

There was a very jovial atmosphere with lots of fun, laughter and chatter. A few people donned funny Christmas headgear and all the activity was recorded on Mac's video camera plus some still pictures on another camera. There was no escape from the lens! Thanks must go to Jim, the Group Leader, for organising the event and to Shirley and Jean for liaising with Rosa and organising the menu.



Earlier this year Rosa had a third Petanca court built for the group as the membership seemed to be ever increasing, in return the group meet for coffee at her hotel every Sunday after their game and by also having their Christmas party there was another way of thanking her for her support. Thanks to Rosa and her staff for a lovely meal and we wish them all a Very Happy Christmas.

Carol Lockhart

And a good time had by all.....

CHRISTMAS DITTY – by Margaret Carney



Christmas Day came bright and clear
We had a very quiet one this year
Just a card is all we want here
No presents, we said, this year.
On New Year's Eve
The Postie knocked upon the door
With a large wrapped parcel on the floor
We opened it just to see
And found we each had a ONE-SIE
a giraffe for Eric
and a white sheep for me
we tried them on and had a big laugh
so, a happy New Year to everyone
see the photos for your sense of fun.

P.S....for those ladies who might enjoy wearing theirs...do take care when partially disrobing for the loo, those sleeves have a tendency to drape themselves into the pan!

U3A VALL DEL POP LEARN HOW TO SLOW DOWN THE AGEING PROCESS

At the first U3A General Meeting of 2014 on 9th January, well-known local nutritionist and fitness instructor, Ann Mather, delighted a large audience of U3A members with her extensive knowledge and explored with us four factors that are known to play a part in the ageing process, these are:- Chronic inflammation, Free Radical Damage, Glycation, and Methylation.

Ann clearly explained each of these headings and also expelled some of the myths that many of us thought to be true. For instance how citrus fruits become alkaline once eaten, not acid as one would expect, and our Ph. balance needs to be slightly more alkaline than acid. Inflammation – we need acute inflammation to repair damage, such as an injury or burn, however, chronic inflammation, such as arthritis, can be caused by a toxic diet and, whereas you cannot cure arthritis once you have it, you can certainly reduce the pain and discomfort by changing your diet to include Omega 3, contained in oily fish, tree fruits, berries, nuts, red and green vegetables. Free Radical Damage is caused by a variety of things such as too much sugar, alcohol, smoking and stress. Glycation is a reaction that takes place when simple sugar molecules, such as fructose or glucose, become attached to proteins or lipid fats without the moderation of an enzyme. The browning of food can cause this to happen, such as toasting bread, browning an omelette, browning meat and also caramelisation. Methylation is a natural process which causes nasty toxins in the body; you can reverse this by taking Vitamin B, which is contained in animal products, nuts, seeds, green leafy vegetables, legumes and shellfish.

Ann answered lots of questions from the audience, who were obviously very interested to learn more. For further information and personal advice you can contact Ann via the U3A website as she also offers a discount to U3A members. Ann is also qualified in Food Intolerance Testing. Our thanks to Ann for a very interesting talk, which I am sure has got us all thinking of how we can start feeling and looking younger.



by Carol Lockhart

A Big Thank You from Specsavers.

A very big thank you to all the members who donated their spectacles to the Lions Appeals. Bob and Sandra delivered a box full to Spec Savers, the collection point, and met Mike Stone, Director of Specsavers, Calpe. He told us that they had been delighted with the response from the public and had reached their target of 3000 units. Mike also said that all the glasses would be checked and then sent to the developing world.

Bob and Sandra Welham



A Christmas Quiz for Caritas, by Heidi Morgan

On Friday 6th December, forty-eight U3A members gathered at a bar in Senija for a festive quiz. Everyone looked merry and bright in their Santa hats, tinsel etc. We sat in teams of four, trying to identify ten Christmas films from photographs, and then got onto the more serious business of remembering names of reindeer, words from Christmas songs and characters from 'A Christmas Carol'.

At half-time, we enjoyed a lovely fish-and-chip supper, and Anne awarded prizes for the best-dressed man, Philip Day, and lady, Thelma Cookson. I wish I'd had a camera as they looked a treat! Then back to work. Where was the singer standing while watching Mummy kissing Santa Claus? If only we knew!

At the end of the evening, prizes were awarded, and we all sang The Twelve Days of Christmas. Each table had to stand up and sing only the lines concerning the team name they had been given, which meant we were up and down like yo-yos, as we were the Turtle Doves.

Many thanks to Anne and Derek Martyr for organising such a fun evening for us, and of course it was all in a good cause, as everyone brought a contribution for Caritas.

Donation to Help of Denia.



Those members who attend the Christmas Extravaganza enjoyed the opportunity of taking part in a charity raffle. The first prize of a beautiful Christmas cake, donated by Maureen Barrett, went to Elaine Horton. Who informed everyone that she was delighted having not had time to make her own. Other prizes went to Pauline Warne, Vicky Harkness and Anne Martyr.

Bob then presented a cheque for 200 euros to Catherine Perez Pinto of Help of Denia, who was grateful for the donation and said that it would certainly help their work, especially at this time of the year.

Many thanks for all your support and a special thank you to Sandra for organising this raffle.
by Bob Welham

A BIG "THANK YOU" FROM DENIA HELP

At our big Christmas meeting, Sandra Welham organised a charity raffle, and asked members to choose a local charity at random (names out of a hat) as a recipient. The winner was Help of Denia – chosen as a candidate after we all realised what good work they do at Denia Hospital, in providing translators. We have now received a letter from their secretary, David Platt, thanking us for the 200€ raised. He concludes ;

"You are probably aware of the assistance we give to people in our community, at the hospitals and at Ben Retir. In addition last Christmas HELP donated a considerable amount of money to local Social Services to help provide food to those with no resources of their own to buy any. Recently, we are focussing on providing medical equipment to local Health Centres which will again be of benefit for all the community. So I can assure you that your donation is not only appreciated, but will also be wisely spent."

CARITAS – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Caritas are still in urgent need of your kind donations. Christmas may be a distant memory now but tummies are still rumbling in the Valley !

Our recent trip to Mas Y Mas, with Sandra, Bob and representatives from the charity in Jalon, was most informative and rewarding. We spent the 270 euros (with 25 cents change !) collected by our U3A over recent months from general meetings and quizzes. The Caritas ladies told us what items were most needed by the families they support and we loaded them into the trolleys accordingly.

These were:

Individual tins of tuna (in packs of 3 or 4)

Individual tins of pate (in packs of 3 or 4)

Jars of Chickpeas. Jars of Lentils

Cola Cao powdered chocolate drink. This is mixed with milk for a nourishing, energising breakfast for the children.

Plastic bottles of olive oil. One litre.

Small cartons of Tomato Frito (paste). Sold in packs of 3 usually.

Packet soups – enough for a family in a big sachet. We bought vegetable variety.

CARTONS OF MILK – FULL FAT. Probably the most needed item of all.

What was purchased was sufficient for 30 families, but lasts only a short time of course.

There are now 36 families being assisted. I have been assured that they are all in genuine need and are referred to the church by social services (‘ vetted ’, if you will). The food is distributed in a controlled way from the depot in Jalon, it is not a free-for-all. Although there are many Spanish families being helped there are also families of other nationalities.

Caritas helps everyone, regardless of creed or colour.

Please continue to give generously, your gifts are reaching those in need.

Derek and Anne Martyr.



TROLLY ‘DASH’ WITH A DIFFERENCE FOR CARITAS!

The €270 raised by the U3A Vall del Pop through generous donations made by the members was spent in Masymas, Jalon on Friday 20th December.

Guided by Caritas President, Señora Josefa Martinez, the trolleys were filled with essential and much needed food for the families supported by Caritas. Members of the U3A present included the President, Bob Welham, Sandra Welham and Derek and Ann Martyr – who also organise regular quiz nights in aid of Caritas.

They were helped with the food purchase by Señora Nodege Font and Señora Celia Gonzales from Cellar Vinyater in Jalon, with Celia clicking away on the calculator to ensure all the money was spent and also acting as interpreter.

Once all the food was purchased Masymas kindly offered to deliver it to the Caritas store in Jalon from where it will be distributed.

The U3A thanks Señoras Martinez, Font and Gonzales for their kind assistance, Masymas for their help and all the U3A Members who have kindly donated money to the Caritas charity. We wish everyone concerned Feliz Navidad y Feliz Año Nuevo.

DISCOUNTER RECOMMENDATION

It's always good to get feedback about the fifty or so organisations offering our members discounts locally (see the Discount page on the website). We have received the following from member Mike Burgess

" Just wanted to say that I went back to the UK for 9 days recently and took advantage of the Royal Parking discount offer to U3A members. The parking experience was as good as any other I have used, all very friendly and efficient, and the discount meant that the cost was extremely good value. I will use them again and would recommend them to others."

Thanks Mike!

AN INVITATION FROM EL CID



No – not HIM in person ... but the secretary of the El Cid Bowls Club has written to our U3A with a special invitation. They offer all our members a free introductory 5 week course on a Saturday afternoon at their venue in Benidoleig. This is lawn bowling, outside on a carpeted surface. They will lend all the equipment needed, and aim to begin in February. See their website at www.elcidbowlsclub.com for additional information and photos of what they do.

Email Editor Jazz, if you are interested. jazzwaspe@hotmail.com

HAPPY ENDINGS

Both cats rescued from a breeder, having a good time in Spain – a tree with catnip toys. What fun.



Popsi – very 'stoned' on catnip!

Steffi wasn't going to wait for Santa!



Smile!

I went to the cemetery yesterday to lay some flowers on a grave. As I was standing there I noticed 4 grave diggers walking about with a coffin, 3 hours later and they're still walking about with it.

I thought to myself, they've lost the plot!!

ANYTHING FOR NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER?

"NEWS 4U" is YOUR newsletter! Please send all those items which you think will interest fellow members of our U3A to lorraineu3a@gmail.com. Things you want - things you want to sell - local information - restaurant favourites etc.. Articles should be in Microsoft Word if at all possible, no more than 200 words with no fancy formatting please. If you have a LOAD of photo's ... just choose your favourite TWO !

Goodbye to 2013.

An Obituary printed in the London Times

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

Knowing when to come in out of the rain;
Why the early bird gets the worm;
Life isn't always fair;
And maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge). His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death,
by his parents, Truth and Trust,
by his wife, Discretion,
by his daughter, Responsibility,
and by his son, Reason.

He is survived by his 5 stepbrothers;
I Know My Rights
I Want It Now
Someone Else Is To Blame
I'm A Victim
Pay me for Doing Nothing

Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone.

Sent in by Anne Martyr

A sad loss at Christmastime

We were all saddened to hear of the death over Christmas of member Allen Lester. Our sympathies to Ruth and all friends.

FOR
SALE

Fender Guitar. Of all the electric guitar designs available, converse with anyone connected to music retail and they're likely to tell you that Fender Stratocasters are comfortably among the biggest sellers.



The Fender Amp The Fender Amp is warm-toned, longtime favourite - the perfect grab-and-go tube amp for stage and studio.

This is a genuine reason for the sale of the Fender Guitar, case and Fender Amp. At the time of purchase ill health and medical problems set in. The items have not been used or played.



550 euros for the set.

As mentioned the instrument has not been used. There is also the lead to the amp, spare strings etc. included in the price

Contact email: madlyn23@hotmail.com. Telephone 619804771

Location: Lliber



VAX Machine & Accessories in full working order- washes and dries carpets, rugs, floors etc can also be used for fabrics on furniture. Instructions are included in English. 30€

Glass 3 tier T.V. Stand (without equipment) 20€.

Collect from Orbeta.



Karen on 671 907 271.

karenweinberg1@aol.com

WANTED

We would like to advertise for a long term rental commencing 1st April 2014. We require a 2/3 bedroom villa, unfurnished with heating and a woodburner .on a flat plot with parking facilities, Vall del Pop area.

634 308 741 OR 965 581 460.

stellaandray@gmail.com

Ray Wood

I am looking for a violin teacher for a beginner, and a violin full size or near.

I live in Alcalali.

johnsonmrv@gmail.com

HAPPY BEGINNINGS 1 !



President Bob presented the new Grandparents with something to celebrate with !

We are not accustomed to printing baby pictures in this Newsletter, but no-one can fail to feel happy for Jim and Carol Lockhart, when the joy they show at the birth of their first grandchild is SO overwhelming! Carol and Jim both work so hard on the U3A committee, we decided to throw out the rule-book and celebrate with them Carol writes



Welcome to the world..... Liam George Lockhart

Born on 5th January at 11 pm Saudi time & weighed 8 lbs 4ozs (3.77 kilos). Pictures attached. His Mum Analou is from the Philippines & Bill (our son) works for British Aerospace in Saudi. Our first grandchild.

Carol and Jim Lockhart

HAPPY BEGINNINGS 2 !



U3A members Jens Bagger and Sue Suri were married in their home town of Benigembla on Saturday, 28th December. The band from Castel de Castells paraded through the streets, led by the bride and her immediate family from their home to the Sindicat (sp?) and cheered on by many of the townspeople. The Valley Voices choir sang for the happy couple before and after the brief ceremony, which was carried out by the Alcalde, and everybody then adjourned upstairs to the bar. There was cava and beer - Jens's own special beer! - available for everybody and the band played some music for singing and dancing.

After an hour or so, the couple left, accompanied by the band, the guests and the locals, to walk down the road to the Restaurant Pa i Vidre which had been taken over for the occasion, with a flower-bedecked red-carpet entrance awaiting them. The band played some more in the bar and then took their leave before the guests moved into the dining-room for dinner, cheering the bride and groom to the top table when everyone else was in place.

After dinner the happy couple ceremonially cut their wedding cake, and then danced to the music of Matt Curtis until midnight, when the evening ended with a firework display.
by Anna Cameron

...But it doesn't end there! Bob presented Jens with a big bottle of something bubbly at our last general meeting, to show the congratulations and good wishes of all the members.



HAPPY BEGINNINGS 3 !

We hear that James Harvie and Barbara Butler also got married over the holidays! They tried to keep it to themselves, (apparently!) but news of the quiet ceremony in Winchester has leaked out.
So

Congratulations!

AND FINALLY!

GROUPS NEWS .

PETANCA GROUP GOES INTERNATIONAL!
A challenge has been issued to our own Petanca Group from a group in Hampshire, who are visiting in October - will this coincide with the visit of the couple from Toronto who pay their dues and join the group in the Autumn??



NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED.
Some of our groups are full to bursting - others see a temporary slump from time to time. Why not look at the groups

list online and think about joining in with something new or perhaps an old interest which needs reviving? The Table Tennis Group are taking new members, as is the Chess Group - beginners or skilled. New groups needing support are the Ukulele Group, Social Dancing, and Line Dancing.

WEDNESDAY WANDERERS - great to see Gail Stewart back in leadership mode! This group meets every week, but details are not posted on the website, so contact Gail if you would like to go on her mailing list.

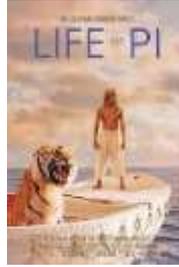
U3A Cinema in Parcent

No tickets needed - 1 Euro on the door. See Cinema Group webpage for details.

SORRY, WE ARE STILL AWAITING CONFIRMATION OF DATES FROM PARCENT TOWN HALL. PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE BEFORE COMING TO FILMS!

Monday 20th January - 'LIFE OF PI' . -

doors open 6.45, film starts 7.15. After a shipwreck, a boy called Pi is adrift in a lifeboat with a bunch of zoo animals - including a ferocious adult Bengal tiger. How does the boy survive? Visually stunning and utterly believable. In English, 121 mins, 2012, cert PG.



Mon 3rd February - 'THE DESCENDANTS' - doors open 6.45, film starts 7.15.



George Clooney plays a Hawaiian businessman in this thoughtful drama, who suddenly finds himself in charge of his two young daughters after his wife has an accident and goes into a coma. Then he discovers that she was having an affair. 115 mins, 2011, cert 15.

Monday 17th February - 'QUARTET', with Maggie Smith, Billy Connolly etc. More details soon.

Jalon Valley Help Quiz Night.

- An evening of good fun at El Cid in Benidoleig on 21st January, 7.30 for 8pm . The quizmaster will be Peter Tomlin, assisted by Anna Cameron... and after the quiz, a two-course meal will be served and you will need to make your menu choices when booking your places – ring 625 349 599 to reserve yours. Tickets cost 12€, and you can book for one, two or three people, or a team of four.



“MEETING THE TEAM “ On January 13th, the committee spent a very pleasant few hours talking to members who came along to see just what it is to be a U3A “Steering Team” member. Thank you to those who agreed to give it a try - we are sure you’ll find it a fun and worthwhile thing to do. Meanwhile - we STILL need a few more, so if you have skills honed over years in paid work ... why not spare us a few hours a week? Email jazzwaspe@hotmail.com.