

Fisherman hooked by Simonds is reel deal

Maurice Gaul

The clatter of trams trundling along Victoria Street seeps into the office of Simonds College's newly-appointed principal, Peter Riordan.

Peter comes to Simonds with 32 years experience in Catholic boys' schools. "I've worked at St Bede's and De La Salle, the last 15 years as De La's deputy principal," he says.

Energetic and articulate, he is thrilled with his first month at Simonds. "It's been great meeting the parents and visiting our students' home rooms," he says. "I've found our teachers to be generous and caring, and the students have been very welcoming."

He strongly believes boys have unique educational needs. "With the world changing so rapidly, many boys feel a disconnectedness and an uncertainty about the future. I want to give them a sense of hope and to ensure that they have good relationships with our staff."

He is keen to highlight the school's varied curriculum offerings. "Literacy and numeracy are critical, but boys also need to explore other areas. Years seven to nine all have iPads, which changes the way they learn. Years nine and 10 complement their core subjects with food technology, woodwork, metalwork, media and art," he

says.

Peter has big plans for Simonds. "I see schools as a partnership between parents, staff and students, and I want to develop a shared vision for the school. I have a background in pastoral care and I want to know our students and not be an office-bound principal," he explains.

He proudly notes the VCE success rate of former Simonds boys at the college's North Fitzroy senior campus. "Around half of our VCE students scored ATAR marks of over 70, which is excellent for a non-selective school. And this year VCAL is also being offered at year 11."

"Sport is important at Simonds. We've just joined the Associated Catholic Colleges sports competitions and are keen to make our mark. We have great local sports facilities and two 24-seater buses. And our students have recently won awards in debating, public speaking and table tennis."

There's a pause when prompted to name his heroes. "Well, heroes improve the situation for others. I'll name a previous boss who has selflessly gone to work in South Sudan." A keen golfer, he grins as he admits that the legendary Greg Norman's halo has slipped after recent "wayward behaviour".

Peter smiles as he calls himself a "broken-down PE teacher", but he is more than happy to chat about his main recreational love, ocean fishing. "I take my boat out onto Port Phillip and trawl near the Heads for couta,



Peter Riordan engages students in a round-table discussion

Photo: Antonella Aucello

salmon and flathead."

There is something unashamedly boyish in his enthusiasm as he whips out his phone to display a recently-hooked banjo shark and a neat line-up of salmon. "But I won't tell you about the time my wires got tangled and I caught a mate's tea cup," he grins.

He happily reveals an intriguing family

detail. "I have an identical twin brother, Mick, and wherever we go we are constantly mistaken for one another. We have six children in total, and when they were little, even they got us mixed up. Fortunately our wives didn't," he laughs.

Maurice Gaul is editor of the News

Livewire brings a gift of tongues to St Al's

Maurice Gaul

Beep beep beep! The bell is ringing for class and girls in the distinctive dark blue of St Aloysius College are scurrying down the packed corridor.

The air buzzes with that magic mix of laughter and energy that marks all happy schools. It's a perfect backdrop to catch a word with vibrant new principal Mary Farah in her second-floor office.

Since starting teaching at Noble Park's Nazareth College, Mary has had three stints as deputy principal — at Thomas Carr College in Tarneit, Mount St Joseph's in Altona, then the last five years at Catholic Ladies College in Eltham.

After just a month as principal, she has clearly fallen in love with the school. "I noticed at once something special about our people and environment," she smiles. "I hope our students follow the example of Sisters of Mercy founder Catherine McAuley who always put others before herself."

Mary cannot speak too highly about her new school. "I've found St Aloysius to be a welcoming and caring community that caters for all students, regardless of their background, and one that offers opportunities for all to do their very best."

The school's roll call includes students from many countries. "This is Australia, this

is who we are. We need to acknowledge our culture has changed. We are all Australian citizens and multiculturalism is part of who we are," she says.

Mary is adamant that a single-sex school is best for girls. "I believe single-sex schools are where girls flourish. They find themselves, they become resilient, they don't need to compete with boys and they can do well in an all-girls environment."

"I want us to be a school of choice. That's a challenge given the number of other Catholic schools nearby, and we need to ensure that we attract students to come here. We need to retain the character of the Sisters of Mercy while also providing learning opportunities that suit the 21st century."

St Aloysius values extra-curricula activities highly. "We own a campus in Torquay where we run an outdoor education program in semester one with students in years seven to 10 attending in their home groups," Mary explains.

In what spare time she has, Mary enjoys walking and socialising with friends. "I love the beach and the water." She laughs as she admits fiction is not high on her priorities. "But I love reading about education and especially leadership, that's my passion."

It is no surprise that she names two famous leaders as her personal heroes. "Winston Churchill led his country fearlessly and met all challenges. Nelson Mandela believed



Everyone's happy as Mary Farah chats with students

Photo: Antonella Aucello

in justice and displayed great compassion," she says. "They were heroes in different ways."

Mary speaks with a distinctive but hard-to-place accent. "I was born in Israel, educated at a boarding school in Nazareth, then came to Australia at 18 and studied at Monash," she explains. "In Israel, I spoke

Arabic and Hebrew, then learnt English and French at school, then studied Japanese and Indonesian at university."

The gift of tongues, indeed! It might prove to be a useful skill for a new principal. "I hope so," she smiles.

Maurice Gaul is editor of the News

NOTICEBOARD



The North and West Melbourne News is a quarterly publication produced by volunteers from North and West Melbourne and the inner city. It is now in its 35th year of production. Readers' contributions are welcomed. Where relevant the *News* may seek alternative opinions in the interests of balance. Contributors' opinions are their own, however, and the *News* takes no responsibility for them. We reserve the right to edit or omit articles considered unsuitable or when space is limited.

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The *News* welcomes new volunteers. If you have skills in writing, drawing, photography, archiving, subediting and proofreading, computer technology or design and layout, please consider joining the team.

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www.centre.org.au

NORTH MELBOURNE LIBRARY**Reading groups — for kids**

Bookaroos: Prep to Grade 4
Last Thursday of the month, 4.00pm

Press Gang: Grade 5+
Third Thursday of the month, 4.00pm

**Reading groups — for adults****Reading Circle**

New time! Second Saturday of the month, 2.00pm

Have a chat about what you are reading

North Melbourne Book Group

Third Wednesday of the month, 6.45pm

20 March	<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i>	Mitch Albom
17 April	<i>Wolf Hall</i>	Hilary Mantel
15 May	<i>Past the Shallows</i>	Favel Parrett
19 June	<i>Foal Bread</i>	Gillian Mears
17 July	<i>Midnight Children</i>	Salman Rushdie
21 August	<i>Major Pettigrew Last Stand</i>	Helen Simonson
18 September	<i>The Casual Vacancy</i>	J.K. Rowling

All welcome — no bookings required
Please phone 9658 9700 for enquiries

What the library staff are reading

Fiona — *Love* by Angela Carter. It is one helluva heck of a love story. Not a happy one.

Andrew — *The Hydrogen Sonata* by Iain M. Banks

Rachael — *Malory Towers* series by Enid Blyton

Kristen — *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone* by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett

Heather — *Cheon of the Never Never* by Kevin Wong Hoy

Tien — *Ordinary Thunderstorms* by William Boyd

Harmony Day: Many Stories – One Australia

Wednesday 20 March, 1.00pm

Join us at North Melbourne Library to hear three people share their very personal stories of how they came to call Australia home.

Abdul will share his story of political activism in Pakistan and the journey he embarked on to seek asylum in Australia.

Mukhtar is a young man who travelled alone from Afghanistan. Mukhtar has been detained as an unaccompanied minor on Christmas Island and at the Broadmeadows MITA Detention Centre.

Kristalo will share some of her story about growing up in Australia with Greek-born parents.

Bookings required — book at www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/MelbourneLibraryService/Pages/Whatson.aspx#Harmony

North Melbourne Library, 66 Errol Street, North Melbourne

St Mary's Annual Fair

Organised by members of St Mary's Church and Kindergarten

Saturday 4th May, 10am to 2pm

in the spacious grounds of St Mary's Anglican Church
corner Queensberry & Howard Streets, North Melbourne

Wide variety of stalls, refreshments and entertainment including books, cakes, children's wear & toys, jams & chutneys, bric-a-brac, produce, tea & coffee, BBQ, jumping castle and face-painting

Come along with your family and friends and enjoy a great day!

Easter Services in North and West Melbourne**St Alban's, Anglican****55 Melrose Street, North Melbourne**

Palm Sunday 24 March 5.00pm Holy Eucharist
Maundy Thursday 28 March 5.00pm Mass of the Lord's Supper
Good Friday 29 March 5.00pm Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion
Easter Day Sunday 31 March 5.00pm Holy Eucharist

St James' Old Cathedral, Anglican**Corner King & Batman streets, West Melbourne (opposite Flagstaff Gardens)**

Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday) 24 March 10.00am
Good Friday 29 March 10.00am A Reading of the Passion
Sunday 31 March 10.00am Easter Day Celebration

St Mary Star of the Sea, Catholic**Corner Victoria & Howard streets, West Melbourne**

Saturday 23 March 6.30pm Vigil Mass
Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) 24 March 10.30am Sunday Mass (in English); 12.00 noon Sunday Mass (in Lithuanian) — blessed palms will be distributed at each mass
Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday of Holy Week, 25, 26 & 27 March, 12.30pm Weekday Mass
Holy Thursday 28 March 7.30pm Mass of the Lord's Supper
Good Friday 29 March 3.00pm Celebration of the Lord's Passion
Holy Saturday 30 March 8.00pm Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday 31 March 10.30am Mass of Easter (in English); 12.00 noon Mass of Easter (in Lithuanian)
Divine Mercy Sunday, 7 April, 10.30am Sunday Mass (in English); 12.00 noon Sunday Mass (in Lithuanian); 1.30pm Divine Mercy Devotions begin

St Mary's, Anglican**Corner Queensberry & Howard streets, North Melbourne**

Palm Sunday 24 March 8.00am Eucharist; 10.00am Sung Eucharist with Procession
Monday 25 March to Wednesday 27 March 6.30pm Eucharist
Thursday 28 March 8.00pm Maundy Liturgy; watch until midnight
Friday 29 March 10.00am Good Friday Liturgy
Saturday 30 March 9.00pm Great Paschal Vigil
Easter Day Sunday 31 March 8.00am Eucharist; 10.00am Sung Eucharist

St Michael's, Catholic**456 Dryburgh Street, North Melbourne**

Tuesday 19 March 9.30am & 7.30pm Lent Reconciliation
Holy Thursday 28 March 6.00pm The Lord's Supper
Good Friday 29 March 3.00pm The Passion of the Lord
Holy Saturday 30 March 5.00pm Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday 31 March 10.15am The Resurrection of the Lord

Saints Peter and Paul, Ukrainian Catholic**Corner Canning & Dryburgh streets, North Melbourne**

Divine Thursday 2 May 9.00am Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great and Vespers; 7.00pm Matins of the Passion and reading of the 12 gospels
Good Friday 3 May Commemoration of the Passion and death of Our Lord — a day of strict fast and abstinence: 9.00am Royal Hours; 6.00pm Vespers and procession with Christ's burial cloth, veneration and Matins
Divine Saturday 4 May 9.00am Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great and Vespers; 6.00pm Solemn celebration of Christ's Resurrection, Matins and blessing of Easter baskets
Sunday 5 May Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ: 8.00am Divine Liturgy — recited; 10.00am Solemn Pontifical Liturgy with blessing of Artos
Bright Monday 6 May 10.00am & 6.00pm Divine Liturgy

The Eighth Day (a Baptist Community)**4 Miller Street, West Melbourne (corner Curzon & Miller streets)**

Good Friday 29 March 9.00am

Easter Day Sunday 31 March 5.30pm

Uniting Church, Mark the Evangelist**51 Curzon Street, North Melbourne**

The congregation meets in the Hall, 4 Elm Street, while the church is under repair.

Passion Sunday 24 March 10.00am Procession with Palms, Eucharist

Maundy Thursday 28 March 7.30pm Eucharist, Foot Washing
Good Friday 29 March 9.30am Reading of the Passion
Saturday 30 March (Easter Vigil) 8.00pm The New Fire, Renewal of Baptismal Vows and Eucharist
Easter Day Sunday 31 March 10.00am Easter Eucharist, Renewal of Baptismal Vows

COMMUNITY

No fuss for Gus as he snoozes on the street

Antonella Aucello

Errol Street is the main destination in North Melbourne, but just around the corner, on Queensberry, lies the area's real star attraction: Gus the dog.

Everyone in North Melbourne knows Gus. This is evident just by spending half an hour in Ace Antiques, the small but tightly-packed from floor to ceiling antique shop that Gus and his human, Dave, manage. Customers walk in and greet Gus like he's a mate.

Or if he's outside "sunbaking" on his street-bed — among the antique-looking suitcases, storage boxes and miscellaneous hard-to-finds — passers-by can't walk past without uttering "Hi Gus" or "Hey boy" or leaning over for a pat.

Dave reveals that Gus' fan base is more extensive, varied and, dare I say, fanatical. There's Charlie, the old fellow who used to stop by to lavish Gus with an assortment of greasy food like sausages and chicken — a ritual to which Dave had to put an end.

Another local, Hilda, buys clumps of shaved ham especially for Gus, on her visits to the Victoria Market. "If I had Gus I would feed him till he bursts!" she revealed to Dave. Then there's "Dixie Dave", so named because he comes by every day and gives Gus the lid of his Dixie Cup to lick. "We have to stop people from feeding Gus because he's on a diet," Dave points out.

Not only does Gus love his food — he also has time for romance in his life. "Gus has many girlfriends and they range from three years old up to 90," laughs Dave.

They have been together since the Staffordshire-terrier cross was a puppy of around eight weeks. Now Gus is nearly 13 (birthday in June). They came from Perth and have lived in North Melbourne, and run Ace Antiques, for 10 years.

"He's a good dog. He's not very hyperactive,

which has been a good thing because hyperactive dogs need a lot of care and running around." Has he broken any stock in the shop? "Not that I can remember, I don't think he's broken anything. He's not like a bull in a china shop," Dave laughs.

He is all enthusiasm when narrating stories of Gus, while Gus just lies on his indoor rug, raising an eyelid or twitching an ear at the sound of his name. Dave closely monitors him when he steps outside the shop, directing him to stay within view or on his bed. Dave will readily admit that Gus draws people into the shop, and this invariably leads to discussions about people and their pets. "He definitely brings customers in. Lots of people come and visit him."

Gus is particularly popular among the many local children who are attracted to the gentle dog. Dave has watched some kids grow up over the years; four or five years on, they're still walking by, seeking out Gus for a pat.

One is Spencer, who lived further along Queensberry Street. Years ago, when the family announced they were moving home, Spencer's first reaction was: "What about Gus? How am I going to see Gus?" recalls Dave, adopting a weeping child's voice. His mother assured him they would come back to visit Gus — and they did.

The popular canine has also received Christmas presents from local kids. One child once came into the store with a present, all wrapped up. Dave mentioned to the boy to place the gift on the floor. "Don't open it, just put it on the ground," suggested Dave. "As soon as he put it on the ground, I said 'Gus what's in there? What's that?'

"At once, Gus started ripping the paper off because he could smell the toy inside. He knew straight away to rip the paper off, so he was tearing at the paper, thinking, 'I'm getting this thing out.' The little kid's eyes were like saucers, he thought it was the smartest thing that the dog unwrapped the present!"



Celebrity canine Gus keeps a weather eye on passers-by outside Ace Antiques

Photo: Antonella Aucello

Of all the Gus stories, Dave's favourite is of the time when Gus helped himself to food in a customer's shopping bag. "One time we had two guys in the shop and they had their shopping bags. They were in the shop for a good 10 minutes and the next moment one guy yelled: 'Oh, you cheeky shit!' Gus had taken the top off his French stick!"

"So the guy pulled the French stick a little more out of the bag and ripped it off and gave him the rest of the roll that he'd probably slobbered on. I tried to buy them another, but they wouldn't take it. They said, 'Nah, we'll dine out on this for months!' It was the funniest thing; we all just cracked up laughing."

When Gus isn't entertaining, he is content

to be taken for his daily morning walk along the block. He visits the lady in the lotto shop without fail and always greets her with a warm "Grrr". In the afternoon, it's a visit to the dog park at Clayton Reserve, where he meets his canine mates and checks his p-mail (perimeter mail) by sniffing the perimeter of the park, checking for new "messages".

In between walks, Gus' day is occupied napping in one of his many beds, both inside and outside the shop. He is happy to attract more customers to Ace Antiques and to accept admiration from all. But please, no food!

Antonella Aucello will write regularly for the News

Jane sings her love song to North Melbourne

Michael Roche

Singer, mother, linguist, teacher, student — Jane O'Grady, 38, is many things. She is also an expat of 10 years who chose late last year to call North Melbourne home.

"I love it. I love its proximity to everything, and it's still got a working class edge," says Jane, then adds one qualification: "I still don't feel I know it completely."

It takes time to really get to know a new place. You need time to accumulate memories and Jane's residency here has been short.

However, she has plenty of time to settle in. "We're planning to stay here for years. It's time for stability," she says.

There have been many changes over the last 10 years. In 2003, Jane and husband Matt moved to Europe with their two young boys. They initially lived in Aachen, a small German city near the border of Belgium and the Netherlands, where Jane sang soul, blues and jazz in bands and at local festivals.

Some years later, Matt moved to France where he now lives permanently. Jane moved to Trieste, a small city in Italy, where she took on a translation scholarship at the university.

She likes small cities, the closeness to everything, and the sense of community. "In

Europe, we always lived no further than five minutes from where we worked and we would always ride to work."

According to Jane, keeping things local helps to keep you sane. "In Trieste, the next city was 35 minutes by car, but contemplating a trip there would be like commuting from Melbourne to Sydney." She notices how different daily life is in Australia. "Commuting is such an accepted fact of life here. You spend hours of the day doing it, and it stresses people out."

So it comes as no surprise that the stress and cost of commuting is looming as a federal election issue this year. Jane has avoided the issue by recreating her European life in North



Jane O'Grady at Di Bella cafe

Photo: Michael Roche

Melbourne.

Everything is local. Her boys, Felix, 14, and Luka, 11, attend local schools. She continues to ride her bike to work, teaching English to newly-arrived migrants in the city. She is also about to embark on a master's of teaching, just around the corner, of course, at the University of Melbourne.

Jane and the boys are getting to know the neighbours. "They are lovely, very personable, especially the man from the garage at the end of our street." He helped her out of a tricky situation when she was waiting on the arrival of furniture. "He even gave Felix a hat one day," she laughs. Luka, who dreams of a world full of skating parks, just needs to be mindful that his skating doesn't wake up a neighbour's baby!

Jane's singing may well find voice in the cultural and artistic hubbub of her new home. Influenced by Italian jazz, she would love to form an Italian singing group. "I love singing in Italian," she says. Her reason is simple: "It's because of the passion!"

Michael Roche writes regularly for the News



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Our MP enjoys positive media coverage

I enjoy reading the *North and West Melbourne News* and look forward to its delivery every quarter. I particularly enjoyed the paper's front page article in the December 2012 edition.

I have known Jennifer Kanis for a number of years and now work with her in the electorate office. Your engaging article introduced me to a number of qualities and life experiences shared by Jennifer of which I was not aware.

It was a lovely article and photograph. So much so that my colleague Shannon and I decided that we would have the front page of the December edition framed. We presented it to Jennifer as a Christmas gift. She was thrilled. It now, enjoys prominence in the electorate office at 146 Peel Street, North Melbourne.

Jane Lawless (Jennifer Kanis MP, electorate office, North Melbourne)

Bernie's bitzer put the bite on the bowler

I enjoyed Bernie Dunn's memories of North Melbourne district cricket 1980-83 (*News*, December). As Bernie's tea-mate in that era, I recall playing Carlton at Arden Street when his dog Harold ran onto the oval, expertly fielded the ball and raced off, chased by a very unhappy bowler. Harold slobbered on the ball and chewed it so badly the umpire had to replace it!

Peter Whitehead (Mt Eliza)

Comings and goings in our town

Maurice Gaul

Nothing ever stands still. In life, the one constant we have is change.

The last two months have seen change aplenty in North and West Melbourne. There have been many comings and goings in our community, with warm welcomes extended to some arrivals and au revoir said to some old friends who have left us.

The *North and West Melbourne News* welcomes new principals to two of our three local secondary schools. At the start of the year, Mary Farah arrived as a new leader at St Aloysius College, North Melbourne while, just over the border in West Melbourne, Peter Riordan took up the reins at Simonds College. Each found time in their busy day to speak to the *News*.

Both Mary and Peter bring a wealth of experience as deputy principals in large Catholic secondary schools. Many challenges, both predictable and unseen, will lie in wait for them, but each brings an energy and optimism to their leadership role. We wish them well.

We say farewell to three men of the cloth, all of whom left their local churches and parishes last month. All three — Fr Max Polak of the Catholic Church's St Mary Star of the Sea, Rev. John Smith of the Uniting Church's Mark the Evangelist, and Fr Richard Murray of the Anglican Church's St Alban's — have been great friends of the *News*.

While none of these good men of the cloth succeeded in giving the editor the spiritual

inspiration and solace he so sorely needs, all three will be missed. Their work has been a blessing to our community and all go with our thanks.

Fr Max was at St Mary's for eight years and has headed off to take on new church duties in Sydney. Rev. John has retired from active ministry after 13 years at Mark the Evangelist and will try his hand at gardening and making plum sauce. Fr Richard has left after 18 months at St Alban's (and three earlier stints in the area) and has moved to Moonee Ponds, while still retaining his chaplaincy work at RMIT.

On the home front, the *News* has also had its share of change. We have recently welcomed many new people to our all-volunteer team. In the recognition that a group such as ours can only survive and prosper with the injection of new blood and fresh ideas, much effort has been put into recruiting new faces for the *News*.

Our planning meeting that shaped this March edition was held in The Centre's meeting room on a stifling January evening. It was a thrill to have a huge turn-up and to welcome eight brand-new, or fairly new, members as both water and ideas flowed freely.

Four were brand new. Antonella Aucello has taken on the key proofreading role, and later found time to profile local celebrity dog Gus for this edition. These pages also feature Megan McCormick's creative writing talents and Militza Banach-Wightman's early journey through year 12. Franz Calvez also joined our team and has offered his graphic design skills.

These four debutants joined four "nearly

new" recruits who have one edition under their belt. Experienced writer Michael Roche, arts correspondent Hooi Khaw, aspiring journalist Patricia Kumar and delightfully whimsical artist Ava Macmaster have already graced our pages. Stylish writer KF Loke missed the meeting but was excused because he was travelling in SE Asia.

Behind those nine new people are our stalwart writers in Katrina Kincade-Sharkey, Suzie Luddon and Steve Jasper. As always, continuing their often unseen but invaluable work for the *News* are our 15-year veterans, advertising coordinator Janet Graham and distribution mastermind Helen Lew Ton.

We also appreciate the contributions of production support worker Rene Heeps and our always helpful photographer, Jim Weatherill, who was given a ticket-of-leave for overseas travel for this edition.

And in the shadows, your editor quacks (or cracks?) occasionally as he tries to sail serenely on the lake while paddling furiously below the surface. He meets a lot of people, hears many tales of woe and drinks a lot of coffee.

Unfortunately, we finish on a sad note. Our long-time layout and production guru, Allan Hood, has been sidelined for this edition due to illness after battling valiantly through recent editions and infusing them with his magic. We miss him and we wish him all the best.

If we say "au revoir", Allan, it's in the true meaning of the term — until we meet again. Soon.

Maurice Gaul is editor of the News

Community Comment: Suzie Luddon asks where would you spend a day if you could go back in time



Brian (34), systems analyst, North Melbourne.

I'd go back to feudal Japan to look at the culture and social and economic conditions, and see if they were like what we imagine.



Carolyn (32), microbiologist, North Melbourne

I'd go back to ancient Rome during the time of the republic and the Caesars because it was such an incredible time in history.



David (23), music teacher, North Melbourne

I'd go back to the night of my 18th birthday because I had 100 friends there and a live band, and it was just an amazing night!



Annette (45), bank worker, West Melbourne

I'd go back to Renaissance-era Florence because Michelangelo and da Vinci were working then, and Florence was such a beautiful city.

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE IN NEED?

Ozanam House, North Melbourne

Working with homeless men in Melbourne since 1953

Ozanam House provides crisis supported accommodation for homeless men over the age of 18 years with complex needs.

We aim to provide a safe, secure and supportive environment enabling residents to actively address the issues that have resulted in them becoming homeless.

If you know someone who is homeless, in crisis and needs assistance please call VincentCare Community Housing on Tel: 9304 0100 or 1800 618 468 (toll free)



**VincentCare
Victoria**

QUÝ VỊ CÓ BIẾT AI ĐANG GẶP KHÓ KHĂN KHÔNG?

Nhà Ozanam, ở North Melbourne

Cung cấp chỗ ở cho nam giới vô gia cư ở Melbourne từ năm 1953

Nhà Ozanam cung cấp chỗ ở có hỗ trợ khẩn hoảng cho nam giới vô gia cư trên 18 tuổi có các nhu cầu phức tạp.

Chúng tôi nhằm cung cấp một môi trường an toàn, bảo đảm và có tinh thần giúp đỡ giúp người cư trú giải quyết hiệu quả các vấn đề dẫn đến tình trạng vô gia cư.

Nếu quý vị biết ai đó đang bị vô gia cư, trong cơn khẩn hoảng và cần được giúp đỡ xin vui lòng gọi cho Các dịch vụ Nhà ở SVDP theo Số điện thoại: 9304 0100 1800 618 468 (số điện thoại miễn phí)



**VincentCare
Victoria**

Handy guide ensures your past doesn't last

Michael Roche

The North Melbourne Legal Service has recently re-published *Getting Past Your Past*, a guide for people with a police record in Victoria.

The service's executive officer, Khoi Cao-Lam, said the guide is as important today as when it was first published. "It is very difficult to find employment, especially suitable employment, with a police record as discrimination occurs relatively frequently in this area," he said.

Recent statistics reveal the level of discrimination. Between 2010 and July 2011, 23 per cent of all complaints received by the Australian Human Rights Commission under the Australian Human Rights Commission Act were on the basis of criminal record discrimination. This statistic does not take into account the many people affected by discrimination because of a police record but who do not make a formal complaint.

An example of discrimination may be an employer forming an unfair judgement of a person's character. A person may be charged with possession of cannabis as a young adult, and, in the eyes of an employer, this could be seen as a sign of poor character. However, this isolated incident may overlook the many positive attributes of the person.

Getting Past Your Past, now in its third

edition, gives an overview of police records and how they can affect getting a job, establishing a business, travelling overseas or applying for insurance. The edition is a collaborative project between the legal service and commercial law firm Herbert Smith Freehills.

"We could not have produced the new edition without the pro-bono support of Herbert Smith Freehills," Khoi said. "We're a small community legal service, and we rely heavily on volunteers and pro-bono support from the legal profession."

North Melbourne Legal Service sees the guide as part of its work to assist the most vulnerable people in our local community. People affected by homelessness, mental illness or alcohol and substance issues often do not have the resources to advocate for themselves when in trouble with the law. They may have a police record, but how do they find legal help when on the receiving end of discrimination?

One way is to go out to the community rather than waiting for the community to come to you. "We do assertive engagement," Khoi explained, referring to the service's work with VincentCare at the local Ozanam Community Centre, which provides support to people who are homeless and marginalised.

The legal service runs regular outreach legal assistance at the Ozanam Community Centre and last year expanded this provision



Khoi Cao-Lam checks the *Getting Past Your Past* guide

Photo: Michael Roche

to Ozanam's evening meals program. "It's active engagement and an opportunity for our lawyers to meet with highly marginalised individuals in an informal setting and develop rapport to support them identify problems and feel comfortable seeking help," Khoi said.

By spending time at the community centre,

clients are more inclined to approach the legal service's lawyers with problems they may have, whether they be concerning a police record or other legal matters.

Michael Roche writes regularly for the News

Fr Max will miss his shining Star of the Sea

Fr Max Polak

It has been more than eight years since I arrived in Melbourne from Hobart to become an assistant priest at St Mary Star of the Sea in West Melbourne. Though I had been ordained many years before, it was the first time I would work as a priest in a parish setting.

As a Catholic priest and member of Opus Dei, my priestly activity usually centred around teaching, giving retreats, offering spiritual guidance and doing chaplaincy work in a university environment. There were new experiences in store for me and these would increase a couple of years later when I was named a parish priest.

St Mary's is a church where many marriages are solemnised, many infant baptisms take place and, of course, there are periodic funerals. It is a spiritual home to people from all over Melbourne, many with family histories linked to this church. It is a place of spiritual refuge for passers-by or

people who work or shop at the markets and other nearby establishments.

On top of everything else, it is a church undergoing a long-term, extensive and costly restoration. This fact presented me with considerable challenges in the earlier years of my appointment. Some of these were quite physical, like carting church furnishings around into makeshift chapels when the church proper was off-limits. Others were mental, like learning about fundraising and dealing with a parish in debt.

As I finished my appointment and found myself called to new duties in Sydney, I noticed how attached I had become to this wonderful place built to the honour and glory of God and the mother of Christ. Its extraordinary beauty inspires reverence, faith and hope. Here I have made new friends, felt a part of numerous families and worked alongside excellent priests and lay people.

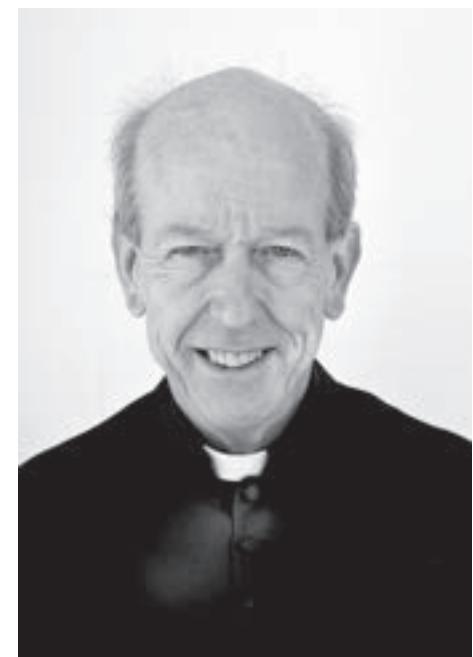
Outstanding in my memory are the establishment of a special parish feast of Our Lady, Star of the Sea; the many young

pilgrims from all over the world who stayed at or visited St Mary's during World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney; and the initiation of an annual multicultural festival and the reinstitution of the Corpus Christi processions.

Christmas at St Mary's with Fr Joe's ever growing Nativity Scene will be sorely missed. So will working with our little team of publicists who produce Download, a monthly "magazine" of interesting articles on matters related to faith and Christian life.

I am confident that life at St Mary's — with God's grace — will go from strength to strength without me. As for me, I hope the same proves true in the years to come in spite of a certain sense of loss. I pray that new parish priest Fr Anthony Bernal will have as happy an experience of St Mary Star of the Sea as I had.

Fr Max Polak was assistant priest then parish priest at St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church from 2004 until moving to Sydney last month



Fr Max Polak

Photo: Jim Weatherill

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Rev. John left a Mark of music and worship

Rev. John Smith

After 13 years as minister of the Uniting Church congregation of Mark the Evangelist in North Melbourne, the base for Hotham Mission, I retired from active ministry at the end of last month.

Mark the Evangelist is unique in the Uniting Church for its weekly celebration of the Eucharist, supported by a liturgical tradition that celebrates the seasons of the Christian year, including the three days of Easter.

There has been a long tradition of good music at Mark the Evangelist, led by two musical directors — Ken Falconer for 24 years, and now Donald Nicolson, the harpsichordist from Latitude 37. It has been a joy to work with two great musicians and to have a congregation and cantors who sing so well.

It has been a challenge and a privilege to conduct an active ministry of worship and pastoral duties in the North Melbourne community.

From the start I was involved with university students, some of whom lived in our properties. And since 2007 I have

been actively involved with representatives from inner Melbourne Uniting Church congregations who support the work of the Church's chaplain at the University of Melbourne.

Through Hotham Mission and Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project, I have played a part in developing projects offering community support to vulnerable people in our community. Included in this has been an important and long standing partnership with St Alban's in Melrose Street.

I remember the friendship and laughter and community contacts that came with serving on the management committee of The Centre from 2002–04. In 2005, having led the congregation through the celebration of 150 years of presence in North Melbourne, I was elected chair of the Docklands' Churches Forum, a forward-thinking ecumenical body that explored opportunities for church and community work in the emerging communities of the Docklands.

It was a visionary exercise, in many ways ahead of its time. The sort of decisions the Kennett government made for the development of the Docklands made it difficult to help create community in that environment, but thankfully change is

happening now.

Since I arrived at Mark the Evangelist in 2000, we have faced several major challenges, not least of which has been the cracking of the church in 2008. This was not a result of too many fire and brimstone sermons. Rather, the foundations sank due to the drying of the soil caused by extended drought, and the walls and roof cracked.

In 2009 the congregation moved to worship in the Elm Street hall. Since then, planning for the restoration and renewal of the church has been a major focus of my last years, using up a lot of time and energy.

Thankfully, work on this project is expected to begin next year. The result will be the church and the whole site should have a new lease of life and continue to be an important place of worship, hospitality and supportive presence in the North Melbourne community.

Although I will no longer be a minister serving the congregation, I will still reside in North Melbourne. I will also spend time in my little paradise, the garden of the cottage that we retreat to in Castlemaine.

Keep an eye open for Dr John's plum sauce, tomato relish and other produce that might start to appear on a community stall near you!



Rev. John Smith

Photo: Jim Weatherill

The Rev. John Smith was the minister at Mark the Evangelist Uniting Church from 2000 until

Fr Richard gave St Alban's the gift of faith

Fr Richard Murray

I recently finished my eighteen months at St Alban's and, for the fourth time, I say farewell to a North Melbourne congregation. The previous farewells were all from St Mary's between 2003 and 2010.

I came to St Alban's to help the parish plan for its future and to help find the "next good thing for St Alban's". Over a year-and-a-half we have been working on just that.

We have defined what the St Alban's parish and mission sees as its particular "patch", and set in place ways forward under the leadership of the new part-time parish priest.

At St Alban's, I found a small congregation making a huge difference in its community and wanting to do so in a better, more intentional way. We have done a huge amount of reflecting, praying, planning, talking, feasting, singing, partying and celebrating.

The St Alban's folk are ready for the future as a faith community that serves its wider community while celebrating and living its faith in God's providence and grace, loving God and their neighbours, and greatly enjoying themselves while they do it!

Part of the uniqueness of St Alban's is that it includes many folk who, while not part of the congregation, are part of the St Alban's family — op shop, food co-op, community garden — all part of its past and present, and, with the Hotham Mission, part of its future.

St Alban's calls itself a mission from the Latin word for "sent". St Alban's folk really believe that they have been sent as "God's hands and feet in this community".

So, farewell to St Alban's parish and mission. Thanks for your welcome, friendship and commitment. Farewell again, also, to North Melbourne, which is a special part of this city.

I have always been somewhat of a fringe-dweller in North Melbourne because I am a denizen of another special part of Melbourne, Moonee Ponds. We are different people; not better or worse than each other, not more or less to be loved than each other; just different, which really is worth celebrating.

What will I miss as I move to my task? No, not the multicultural community. RMIT (where I am senior chaplain) and Moonee Ponds are multicultural enough. And not the cultural climate. Moonee Ponds is no cultural desert.

Rather, it will be the North Melbourne



Fr Richard Murray

Photo: Jim Weatherill

characters and the suburb itself. We have characters in Moonee Ponds, but without that

unselfconscious and unaffected eccentricity that we see between the Queen Vic Market and the high rise flats. I have always valued meeting people who are different just because they are, not because they feel they should be.

I will also miss a community that so skilfully allows change to happen around it without allowing it to change its essential nature. I knew North Melbourne in the 1970s. It has undergone massive change in 40-odd years, but strangely, it hasn't changed at all. The gasometer is gone from opposite the Arden Street Oval, many factories are now offices and residences, but resilient, stubborn North Melbourne remains North Melbourne.

Change happens without touching North Melbourne's soul, and it happens on North Melbourne's terms. Other communities are re-imagined or re-imaged in the change process, but North Melbourne embraces change and makes change re-imagine itself.

So I leave the suburb again. I will be back one day and will certainly visit from time to time. Until then, "Good-bye, and God bless you, North Melbourne."

Fr Richard Murray was intentional interim priest at St Alban's Anglican parish and mission from 2011 until last month

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Rotary wheels out new plans to find recruits

Conrad Cunningham

In today's self-focussed world, an often missing element is a reflection on those famous words delivered by J F Kennedy, "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country", in his inauguration speech 42 years ago.

A malaise is sweeping through organisations designated as "service clubs", and both membership and involvement are in gradual decline. Rotary in Australia has been impacted by this as have Lions and other groups who wear the "service" badge with pride.

The clubs' mission of fundraising for the less fortunate and disenfranchised is no longer a celebrated cause, but is often obscured by an apparent lack of interest. Despite commendable efforts to check a membership decline, Rotary is seeing its members grow older, and the task of attracting new members is becoming more difficult.

Endless discussion has not led to a discovery of the secret to recruiting new members. While a study of demographics confirms the increased age of recruits, it does not reveal the specific personal motivations of people who become a Rotarian.

Some feel that attending at least 48

meetings a year and satisfying the requirement of a "make good" attendance for any missed meeting inhibits those employed in middle management whose mantra involves "too busy" reasons, regardless of the time of

meetings.

North Melbourne Rotary has experienced all of these problems and is continually probing the concerns to find viable solutions. Our numbers have stagnated at around 25



Local Rotary farewells Danish exchange student Karina Srensen Photo: Courtesy NM Rotary

members during the past decade — sometimes we attract members, only to lose others due to relocations or time constraints.

One solution has been to create the "Friends of Rotary" membership. This doesn't require regular attendance and has only a nominal membership fee. Those who take it up can be involved in an existing fundraising project of their choice. Or they can raise a concept for evaluation and engage with members to create a working solution, thus allowing personal choice and flexibility.

For Rotary to continue its meaningful role within the community, lines of communication and personal interaction are required. "Friends of Rotary" could create an encouraging environment for closer community interaction and involvement.

Recent invitations by the local branch for submissions to access community grants are part of this concept. If interested, it is a good idea to discuss with the president.

Membership manager Ted Dziadkiewicz runs his business, Contours Travel, in Victoria Street. He is keen to discuss any membership issues readers may have. Ted can be reached on 9328 8488 or 0408 106 719. Give him a call and become involved in the Rotary cause!

Conrad Cunningham is bulletin editor for North Melbourne Rotary

Ned Kelly's last ride was through our town

Maurice Gaul

Bushranger Ned Kelly's last ride took him through the streets of North Melbourne just eight weeks ago. However, this time the banks were spared — the national folk-hero was on his way to his funeral Mass and burial in north-east Victoria.

David Stevens is branch manager of Tobin Brothers Funerals local head office. "After Ned's remains were exhumed from Pentridge then identified by the Institute of Forensic Medicine, Kelly family members came to us to arrange the funeral and burial," he said.

"On Friday 18 January, his remains were placed in a coffin at the Institute in Southbank then put into our hearse before travelling in cortege with Kelly family descendants following, down the freeway through North Melbourne. All then drove to St Patrick's in Wangaratta for Ned's funeral Mass," David said.

"The coffin was processed into the church by family members. Those who spoke at the funeral held Ned's treasured green sash — presented to him as an 11-year-old for saving a drowning child then, 15 years later, worn under his armour at the Glenrowan siege. After the funeral, the sash was then placed on the coffin for its return to Tobins' city mortuary."

Two days later, the coffin was put back in the hearse, draped with the two-metre sash and covered in native flowers including Australian wattle and kangaroo paw. It was taken back to the north-east for burial at the tiny Greta cemetery near the Kelly family home. Family members carried Ned's coffin to the gravesite, prayers were said over it and it was lowered.

To deter souvenir hunters or vandals, the coffin was given a concrete base and a steel covering. "Some decoy graves were dug to give Ned and his family some peace, and we can only say Ned was interred near where his mother and brothers are buried. Hopefully, the true location will remain a

mystery," David said.

He is proud of Tobin Brothers' involvement in this last chapter of the Kelly story. "I regard Ned as a significant person in our history, notwithstanding his offences and notoriety. I believe that every human deserves an appropriate burial. And now the Kelly family know that Ned's final wishes have been met. I and the company are proud to have been involved."

So, Ned Kelly made his final journey, via North Melbourne, back home to the north-east district that he so loved. Perhaps, now he has received a long overdue funeral and burial, his spirit will sleep peacefully.

Yet, in a sense, Ned will forever ride free and bold — together with brother Dan and mates Joe Byrne and Steve Hart — through the imagination of all but the most prosaic.

He will forever be galloping to the gang's hideouts deep in the rugged Strathbogies or flaming along the idyllic valley of the King.

Maurice Gaul is editor of the News



Drawing: Ava Macmaster

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the News Garden Patch

Natasha Grogan

As regular readers will be aware, my passion is teaching children and their families to grow their own organic produce. So, with summer now gone and mild autumn days with us, I thought I would share with you some of my favourite ways to inspire children to become enthusiastic gardeners.

Education is a balance — it requires teachers to cater for the various ways in which children learn. There is no tried and true way of encouraging a child to like gardening.

The other day my husband asked me what happens when a child I am teaching has no interest in being in the garden. The answer is simple: you have to first address the child before you can address the education. Once you pinpoint a child's skill set and personality, you can work out a way that they will enjoy being in the garden.

For example, a child who enjoys reading

Plant a love of gardening in kids

and writing may enjoy the role of garden scribe with activities such as label writing, recording plant information/growth and making a garden calendar. Once this child can identify their role and contribution to the garden, they will branch out (a little nature metaphor for you there!) and begin to be a part of other gardening activities.

The wonderful thing about teaching gardening is that it caters for all children. An active child will enjoy sweeping, pulling out old plants and watering, while a child who moves from one job to the next will often enjoy bug hunting, and an introverted child may enjoy botanical drawings and planting. Once a child is engaged you can explore other aspects of gardening to inspire them to be a part of the growing process.

First, let's talk about growing plants from cuttings

You will need secateurs, a "mother plant" (I recommend these plants: bay tree, lavender, rosemary, sage or thyme), honey, seed-raising mix, pots and a watering can.

Then you will need to follow a checklist. Start by making your cutting from your mother plant about 10-15cm long (cut just below the leaf line); then cut the top off the stem (5cm or less) and strip off leaves five centimetres from the base of your stem.

Next, dip the base of your stem into honey.



Keen young gardener gives plants a drink

Photo: Natasha Grogan

(The kids love this, but make sure they wipe the edges of their stem like a paint brush into a paint pot.) If you're planting into a pot, fill it with seed-raising mix then water in the mix (or the soil where you are planting).

To finish up, plant the stem into the seed-raising mix (or soil) up to the first leaf. Then place your cutting in a sunny spot and

remember to keep the soil damp. Then, once you see new growth, the cutting is ready to transplant. (If you planted directly into your soil, rejoice that your cutting has worked!)

Second, let's look at raising seeds on cotton wool.

Here you will need cotton wool, seeds, a tray and a spray bottle. Start by spreading the cotton wool over the tray, and be sure not to leave any gaps. Then you dampen the cotton wool with the spray bottle and sprinkle the seeds over the cotton wool. (You can encourage the children to make patterns or write their names.)

Next, use the spray bottle to spray the seeds then place the tray in a bright area but not in direct sunlight. Give the children the job of keeping the wool damp. After a week or so, the seeds will begin to germinate. When they are large enough, the cotton wool can be lifted off the tray and planted in a pot or in the garden.

So there you have it! Some simple garden activities to get you and your children excited about growing your own food. If you are after some more tips and tricks, check out The Sage Garden's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/TheSageGarden.

Natasha Grogan is director of The Sage Garden. She writes regular seasonal gardening hints for the News

Local volunteers vocal about Learn Local

Izumi Ishikawa

If you love spending time outdoors and would like to explore opportunities for training and employment in the conservation and land management industry, Conservation Volunteers Australia's Learn Local course is for you.

Conservation Volunteers is offering residents in North and West Melbourne a three-day pre-accredited Learn Local course for free to help people develop new skills and pathways that can lead to new job choices, further education and the chance to interact with others in the local community.

Funded by Adult Community and Further Education, the Learn Local course provides participants with hands-on skills in practical conservation activities. These include creating a predator-proof fence for endangered species, planting native trees, and identifying and removing invasive weeds to protect the natural environment.

Trevor Hume, manager of Melbourne Conservation Volunteers Australia, said: "Learn Local courses are a fantastic way for local people to get a taste of what the conservation



(L-R) Volunteers Jack, Matt and Ashok are all smiles at Woodlands Historic Park

Photo: Travis Scicchitano

and land management industry is all about.

"Participants learn valuable skills and

knowledge on our courses while working alongside an experienced tutor who has a background in natural resource management," he said.

Free transport is provided from Adderley Street in West Melbourne to Learn Local courses running until the end of June at Woodlands Historic Park in Greenvale and Quarry Hills Park in South Morang.

On completion of the course, participants receive a certificate of participation that highlights the employability skills they have demonstrated. Course material includes a careers section to help learners identify further conservation and land management training and employment pathways.

If you would like to find out more about the Learn Local courses that we offer, you can phone the Melbourne office of Conservation Volunteers Australia on 9326 8250 or check their website, melbourne@cva.org.au.

Or you might choose to pop into their Melbourne office at 162 Adderley Street, West Melbourne for a chat with the friendly staff.

Izumi Ishikawa is regional coordinator of Conservation Volunteers Australia



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Margaret Langdon

Chocky shock at Easter!

Abattle is raging on the home front with Easter just a couple of weeks away.

In one corner are the angels, me and my willpower; in the other is the devil, Easter chocolate. I've been fighting the good fight for days now, but it's getting tougher. Those Red Tulip Elegant Rabbits are enticing me — mocking me — with their shiny coloured foil and the seductive promise of chocolatey delights.

This year I resolved I wouldn't eat chocolate over Easter. Yes, I know that sounds crazy, but there is some method in my

madness. I always put on weight over winter, you see, and the process begins around Easter time. I don't think it's coincidental that my body begins hoarding fat supplies for winter at the same time I let my inner chocoholic run free.

My fat cells must look forward to Easter. It's a bit like their annual alarm clock. "Hey, wake up, guys," they say to each other. "She's ripped the head off a Lindt bunny and lined up the Cadbury Crème eggs. Muster the troops. Sound the bugle. Charge!"

Usually I don't have chocolate in the house. Out of sight is out of mind, after all. Of course, this is impossible at Easter. First of all, the Easter bunny has to visit. He's too scared not to. My daughter, Lauren, leaves him detailed instructions every year about his chocolate delivery duties.

This year's note reads: "Dear Easter bunny, please leave a trail of little eggs from our bedrooms down the stairs to the family room to where you put our rabbits. And then get more little ones and hide them under the cushions and stuff so Max and me can have an Easter egg hunt. Thanks."

Naturally, the bunny obliged. As well as those offerings, the kids are always given more chocolate from family and friends. It's bad for kids to eat too much chocolate, right? So, caring mother that I am, I usually help them out.

But this year, I resolved, would be different. I can't avoid having chocolate in the house, but surely I don't have to eat it. I'm hoping I can fool my fat cells into snoozing a little longer and not waking up until it's almost spring. Clever, eh?

Besides, eating the kids' Easter chocolate can be dangerous. They don't mind sharing, within reason, but sometimes my inner chocoholic goes too far.

I remember one incident a few years ago when the kids were asleep in bed and I couldn't resist the lure of one of Lauren's chocolate bunnies. "Surely I could just eat a tiny bit of one ear. That won't matter," I rationalised to myself.

Five minutes later I realised to my horror I had devoured both ears and the back of the head. Plagued with guilt, I did what any chocoholic mother would do — I tried to hide the evidence and hoped she wouldn't notice. I shaped the foil back up to look like the ears were still there, although it did look a bit sad and empty.

First thing next morning, little Lauren had a good look at her chocolate stash in anticipation of what she might be allowed to eat later on. She was about to turn away when her gaze swung back to the ear-less rabbit. She stared at it, and then she stared at me. "Mummy!" she said, hands on hips and looking fierce. "What happened to my rabbit?"

I had to confess. She's never forgotten. Perhaps that is the psychological basis for her compulsion to boss the Easter bunny around. I'm not sure.

Anyway, the no-chocolate resolution seemed like a good idea a few weeks ago. But that was before the house began to fill up with shiny foil eggs and bunnies. That was before I could hear the rustling of foil and the crack of chocolate as the kids bit into a bunny or snapped an egg into nibble-sized pieces.

I'm still bravely fighting the battle, but I'm wondering if it's only a matter of time before I wave the white flag of surrender. That irresistible white chocolate flag.

Margaret Langdon writes regularly about raising Max and Lauren as a single mum



Drawing: Ava Macmaster

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 Cost: \$125/\$55 Concession/Free to
 Volunteers*

Introduction to Media
 Time: Weekly for each edition
 Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: 22 April to 28 June
 Cost: \$125/\$55 Concession/Free to
 Volunteers*

**Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
(TAE40110)**
 Intensive Course:
 Time: 6 – 9pm
 Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: 4 March to 7 June or 22 July to 21
 October
 Cost: \$1500/\$300 Concession*

**Upgrade To TAE40110 from old BSZ40198
and TAA40104**
 Time: 9am – 4pm
 Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: Monday April 8
 Cost: \$425

**Certificate III in Education Support
(CHC30808)**
 Time: 9:30am – 3:30pm
 Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: 8 May to 18 September
 Cost: \$1225/\$250 Concession*

Introduction to Working in a Call Centre
 Time: By agreement
 Venue: North Melbourne Library
 Dates: April to June
 Cost: \$125/55 Concession

**Food Handling FDFFS1001A &
FDFFS2001A**
 Time: Two consecutive Fridays 9am – 4pm
 Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: April to June
 Cost: \$125/ \$55 Concession

COMPUTER PROGRAM
Basic Computers
 Time: Friday 9 – 11am
 Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: 26 April to 28 June
 Cost: \$80/\$55 concession

Internet and Email
 Time: Friday 11am – 1pm

Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: 26 April to 28 June
 Cost: \$80/ \$55 Concession

Microsoft
 Time: Wednesday 1 – 3pm
 Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: 24 April to 26 June
 Cost: \$80/\$55 Concession

Digital Photography
 Time: Tuesday 10am – 12pm
 Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: April 14, 21, 28; May 11, 18, 25
 Cost: \$125/\$55 Concession

**International Computer Drivers License
(ICDL) NEW**
 Time: Wednesday 1 – 3pm
 Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: Weekly during each term
 Cost: \$125/\$55 Concession

Podcasting
 Time: Thursday 1:30 – 3:30pm
 Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: 2 May
 Cost: \$35

IGadgets for the E-Challenged
 Time: Wednesday 6 – 7:30pm
 Venue: Shop 58
 Dates: 25 April; 1, 8, 15 May
 Cost: \$65/50 Concession

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAM
Yoga Program Beginner
 Time: Monday 6 – 7:30pm
 Venue: The Meat Market
 Dates: 22 April to 24 June
 Cost: \$165/ \$125 Concession

Pilates Program Intermediate
 Time: Thursday 6:45 – 7:30 pm
 Venue: The Meat Market

Dates: 18 April to 27 June

Cost: \$165/\$125 concession

Pilates Program Beginner Plus
 Time: Thursday 7:30 – 8:15pm

Venue: The Meat Market

Dates: 18 April to 27 June

Cost: \$165/\$125 Concession

Pilates Program General Class
(Beginner Plus & Above) NEW

Time: Thursday 6 – 6:45pm

Venue: The Meat Market

Dates: 18 April to 27 June
Cost: \$165/\$125 Concession

First Aid Level 2

Time: Saturday 9am – 4pm
Venue: Shop 58
Dates: 27 April
Cost: \$160

Management of Anaphylaxis

Time: Saturday 9:30am – 12:30pm
Venue: Shop 58
Dates: May to June
Cost: \$55

ART AND CRAFT PROGRAM

Mosaics
Time: Thursday 1 – 3pm
Venue: North Melbourne Library
Dates: 2 May to 27 June
Cost: \$130

Exploring Calligraphy

Time: Tuesday 7:30 – 9:30pm
Venue: Shop 58
Dates: 23 April to 25 June
Cost: \$115/\$100 concession

The Art Institute

Time: Tuesday 1 – 3pm
Venue: Shop 58
Dates: 23 April to 25 June
Cost: \$55/\$35 concession

Art Warriors

(Primary Grades 1, 2 & 3)
Time: Tuesday 3:45 – 5:15pm
Venue: Shop 58
Dates: 23 April to 25 June
Cost: \$115/\$100 concession

Art Heroes

(Primary Grade 4, 5 & 6) NEW
Time: Monday 3:45 – 5:15pm

Venue: Shop 58
Dates: 22 April – 24 June
Cost: \$115/\$100 Concession

Nature Play

Time: Tuesday 11 – 11:45am
Venue: Shop 58
Dates: 23 April to 25 June
Cost: \$5 per session

Introduction to Pottery

Time: Tuesday 9am – 12:30pm
Venue: Shop 58
Dates: 23 April to 25 June
Cost: \$75

Introduction to Music Technology

Time: Tuesday 4 – 6pm
Venue: Shop 58
Dates: 23 April to 25 June
Cost: \$75

*subject to conditions

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST ARE INVITED FOR THE FOLLOWING NEW PROGRAMS

European Languages – French, Italian, and Spanish
Japanese **NEW**
Aromatherapy
Introduction to Massage
Introduction to Commercial Cleaning
Retirement Planning
Finances-Planning, Investments, Personal Money Management
Girls Create (an art class for young women)
Yearning to Paint (for adults)
Building a Wood Fired Oven
Art Walks

Global Homework Program

The Centre, in partnership with North Melbourne Library offers FREE homework tutoring sessions for all students in the North Melbourne area.

LOCATION

Level 1, Hotham Room, North Melbourne Library.

TIMETABLE

Primary Group (Years 4-5)	Wednesday	3:30pm - 5:00pm
Transition Group (Year 6)	Monday	3:30pm - 5:00pm
Secondary Group (Years 7-12)	Tuesday	4:00pm - 6:00pm

COME ALONG AND JOIN THE FUN!

For more information and enrolment –
please contact The Centre on 03 9328 1126.



Be self aware and live

Kevin Ellis

self-aware and, as a result, more confident. Self-awareness is about understanding yourself and better understanding what you have pre-built into your system.

A one-off self-awareness for women workshop will be held at The Centre on Wednesday 24 April from 7.00–9.00pm. It will explore case studies and interactively work out how participants can better tune their intuition to raise their awareness when required.

In turn, it will empower females to live their lives in their own way, and to do so by understanding and minimising unnecessary risks. Contact The Centre (9328 1126) to book your place.

Kevin Ellis has 32 years experience dealing with awareness and personal protection issues in his time with the UK police

A way to help others

Amy Baillie

I will be taking an education support course at The Centre in May. Before studying to become a primary education teacher, I gained experience as an education support staff member.

I loved this role as there was so much variety in the students I worked with and the help I could provide them. I spent time helping students in early intervention, primary, special education and in some college programs.

I have taught vocational education courses in education support for over four years. “Education support” is the new name often used in schools for people who work as teacher aides or integration aides.

Education support staff help students with disabilities or other special learning needs to achieve their potential in schools. They work with the teacher to help ensure students get the support they need.

I love teaching education support as I know

it leads to an exciting and rewarding career path in helping kids to learn. It is a great way to work with students while still getting to enjoy good work hours and a low level of responsibility in a team environment.

In May The Centre plans to begin a certificate III in education support. Participants will come into class for 12 sessions in which we will cover the role of education support staff. They will also get the opportunity to complete work experience in a primary, secondary or special education school.

This can be one of the most exciting and fun parts of the course where students get hands-on experience working with teachers and children. Students commonly get to help in classrooms, listening to children read, helping them with their writing and conducting spelling tests.

If interested, contact The Centre on 9328 1126.

Amy Baillie is The Centre's trainer in education support





North and West Melbourne Association

Proposed increases in VCAT fees

The Association is alarmed at the Department of Justice proposal to increase fees for the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to up to three times current levels. Basic fees for an application to the planning and environment list would jump from \$322 to over \$1000. Hearing fees would also be introduced.

Residents and community groups with limited funds could be locked out of the appeal process, contradicting VCAT's original rationale of providing a tribunal accessible to all stakeholders.

The Association lodged a submission pointing out the undemocratic nature of the proposed increases and the risk that the shape of our suburbs and communities would be determined by those with substantial resources, without the balance provided by local people who have the greatest understanding of their neighbourhoods' assets and needs.

We also pointed out that our members and supporters do not undertake appeals without careful consideration and that much time and effort is spent on a voluntary basis to ensure all sides of an argument are understood.

Members were encouraged to write their own submissions.

Heritage lost

The style of the facade of 132–134 Roden Street is rare and impressive. Dating from 1876, it is the sort of unique heritage that one would expect to be well protected by the heritage sections in the planning scheme.

Not so. Melbourne City Council recently approved

its demolition and replacement with a multicoloured five-storey block of residential units resembling a stack of containers.

Disillusioned and frustrated by the council's decision, the Association appealed to VCAT, joined by the Hotham History Project, the owners' corporation of 561 Spencer Street and a Roden Street resident.

The heritage issues centred around the D-grading of the facade and the level-3 streetscape classification. Both are the lowest in their category, which, coupled with council's support of demolition, left the application highly exposed at VCAT.

The Association argued that this D-graded house was a special case because of its wide double frontage, its unusual proportions and its former position in a row development. We could find no wider two-storey house in West Melbourne that fulfilled these criteria. The fact that the house had been modified and its isolation from other heritage-graded dwellings — although there are some other highly graded houses in the street — did not work in our favour.

The council heritage consultant considered the heritage values of the building warranted its retention and opposed demolition. The Association requested that the application be 'called in' for consideration by the Future Melbourne Committee, but this did not happen. The decision to demolish was made by the council administration.

The developer's heritage 'expert witness' at VCAT strongly supported demolition. His interpretation of council policy as incorporated in the planning scheme was questionable and his dismissal of council's heritage

advisor ruthless.

Other issues we raised, such as the role of heritage in promoting and retaining housing diversity, were totally ignored in VCAT's decision.

This decision reinforces the current trend by Melbourne City Council and VCAT to allow demolition of graded houses. North and West Melbourne have by far the highest proportion of D-graded houses in any area of the City of Melbourne, but many are isolated and in level-3 streetscapes. They are exposed and vulnerable. We need to work with council on its heritage strategy, to enshrine protection of these gradings in the planning scheme and to stop the erosion of our priceless heritage, and with it our cultural identity.

We encourage all those who are interested to come along to an Association meeting (see details below). Working together we can make a difference.

Regional Rail Link update

The Regional Rail Link Authority (RRLA) held a public meeting on 18 December to provide information on the City to Maribyrnong River section of the project.

Presentations on the overall plan and on vibration, air quality and noise took up much of the time, but community members did get the chance to raise their many concerns. One positive outcome was the acknowledgment that the vibration study for Railway Place was substandard and the subsequent referral of both this and the air quality report to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for review.

The following morning, The Age broke the story ('Impact on iconic venue could stymie rail link', 19/12/12) that Planning Minister Guy had ordered the RRLA to submit a noise assessment for the area affecting West Melbourne "due to concerns about harmful noise levels". A supplement to the original RRL environment management plan was due on 31 December but residents have not heard the results of this.

Recent changes to the plans had added another new section to the Dudley Street bridge and rail tracks sited within half a metre of Festival Hall.

Work on the Dudley Street bridge has been deferred. The scheduled recoating of the nearby high-pressure gas pipeline was delayed because a suitable subcontractor could not be found but work on this has now started.

Other construction work has continued this year, with some improvement in the process to notify those affected and a reduction in train speeds, thanks to constant lobbying by local residents. The freight tracks are being lowered so that all goods trains will be able to pass under the rail flyover in future, leaving the elevated tracks free for regional and interstate trains.



Roden Street heritage: due for demolition

Photo: Bill Cook

The RRLA arranged a further community information session for Wednesday 20 February (after deadline) at which the results of the EPA's review of the air quality and vibration reports were due to be presented. However, at time of going to press, we understood the review was not complete. For more information go to www.fairgoforwestmelbourne.com and www.facebook.com/FairGoForWestMelbourne

Further information

Association meetings are held at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of the month in the Dewey Common Room, Bastow Institute, 601 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne (enter off Union Street on the west side of the institute).

How Dr Sally got pally with Tink in a wink

Melissa Hughes

Last year Lort Smith Animal Shelter re-homed 987 animals (282 dogs, 618 cats, 54 birds, 25 rabbits, 28 guinea pigs) into new loving homes. Adoption partner Petbarn re-homed 145 of our shelter cats, kittens, dogs and puppies, bringing our grand total for last year to 1132.

As Lort Smith is one of the smaller shelters in Melbourne, this adoption number is a true testament to the hard work of the shelter team at the hospital.

"All of these animals have been given up once already; we want to be sure that there won't be a

second time," said Lort Smith shelter manager Liz K Walker. "Our staff take time and consideration to ensure new owners meet the needs of the animal and that the animal meets the needs of the people looking to adopt."

Lort Smith Animal Hospital promotes responsible pet ownership, which means every animal adopted out must first be desexed, microchipped and vaccinated. As part of the re-homing process, all shelter animals have eight days in quarantine, receive temperament testing and get any other medical treatment required. Last year the shortest time a shelter animal waited for a new home was five minutes and the longest was eight months.

Lort Smith ambassador Dr Sally Cockburn fell

in love with Tink, a seven-year-old Cavalier King Charles, after meeting her for just five minutes. After passing the interview process and conducting a meet-and-greet with her current dog, Molly, Dr Cockburn adopted Tink on Christmas Day.

"I don't have the time to train up another puppy, but when I met Tink I instantly fell in love; I just couldn't not take her home. Adopting an older dog was the best decision I made all year," she said.

Lort Smith advocates pet adoptions. If you are interested in adopting a pet, visit www.lortsmith.com for further information, or phone our shelter on 9321 7260.

Melissa Hughes is public relations assistant at Lort Smith Animal Hospital



Volunteers and staff celebrate with Turbo
Photo: Melissa Hughes

North & West Melbourne Association Inc.

Working together for the future of our community



Email: info@nwma.org.au

Post: PO Box 102
North Melbourne Vic 3051

Web: www.nwma.org.au

Who are we?

We are a group of people who live or work in North and West Melbourne, a community that is very much part of the inner-city life of Melbourne.

What are our aims?

They include:

- promoting a sense of community in our eclectic, culturally diverse neighbourhood
- protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment of the area
- enabling community contacts

What do we do?

The NWMA represents its members by canvassing their views, concerns and proposals on issues of community interest to local, state and federal governments.

We cordially invite you to join the Association and:

- share your community concerns with us
- attend meetings
- join an interest-based group
- attend our quarterly social functions
- expand your community contacts

and, if you wish, help us to:

- monitor City of Melbourne Council agendas and minutes
- represent the Association on committees and delegations
- prepare submissions on strategic issues
- monitor planning permit applications
- promote sustainable transport and manage traffic issues
- support our internal processes, including website management.

An active community is a progressive community

Whether you have lived or worked here for many years or have just moved to North or West Melbourne, one thing you probably enjoy is the livable quality of the built environment.

The North & West Melbourne Association has worked for more than 30 years to maintain the amenity and enhance the wellbeing of residents, workers and visitors.

Please contact us if you would like to share your skills. You don't need to be an expert, just keen to be involved and be part of the team!



Supported by the City of Melbourne Community Services Grants Program

Let's Make a Date

Suzie Luddon

Where are the men?

On a slow news day, one of the perennials that get an airing is the one about the man drought.

This story warns all the single women out there that if they haven't found a man by the age of 30, the odds of doing so are so much stacked against them that they have more chance of being hunted down by wolves than by a decent bloke.

So what are women to do with this information? Move to another country where the gender balance is more in their favour? Settle for a rubbish relationship for fear of

being left out in the cold? Resign themselves to being single and adopt a million cats?

Does anyone else smell a rat here? Are there more women than men in the population? Well, the lower life expectancy of men means that women in their nineties looking for love will be up against some stiff competition.

However, according to demography analysts idblog, there is at most a difference of five per cent more women than men in any age group in Australia, and mostly it's less than that. Take into account the incidence of dating across age groups, same-sex dating and people who have no desire to date at all, and the numbers become insignificant.

But that doesn't change the perception that finding a good man is akin to winning the lottery — and just as likely to happen.

"Melissa", for instance, is despairing of ever meeting her match. She's tried the Internet, dating agencies, speed dating, hanging out at footy matches and bars and pubs, asking friends to set her up — but all to no avail.

Sure, she's met plenty of men, but none of them felt right for her. Which raises the key question, is she being too picky? Well, there was the guy who showed up for a date wearing a check shirt and striped shorts, topped off with a classy socks-and-sandals combo, so there was no coming back from that for Melissa.

Then there was the bloke who proceeded

to describe all the terrible dating experiences he'd had, again, not endearing himself to his current date. But then there were the ones who didn't get past go due to not posting a photo, not being able to tell the difference between "your" and "you're", and professing to like James Blunt.

But should those seemingly minor things be deal breakers?

Well, I guess it helps to be clear about what you're looking for and what your deal breakers actually are. If grammatical errors make you break out in hives, or if colour clashes send you into paroxysms of shame about being seen with someone so sartorially challenged, then put them on the list of non-negotiables.

But if you can overlook the less heinous crimes and give things a chance, then maybe their lack of taste in music becomes insignificant in view of their score on Angry Birds or the way they can drink all night without once slurring their words. Or whatever else might turn you on.

Fear induces panic, so don't buy into the hype that there are only ten eligible men left on the planet and that none of them live in Melbourne. No need to lower your standards either. Just be clear about what you want and then get out and find it!

Suzie Luddon writes regularly about the perilous world of online dating

Let's get a quorum at homeless forum

Nicky McColl Jones

The sun was shining at the Spring Fling festival last October as locals gathered in Errol Street to enjoy the festivities.

The North and West Melbourne Homelessness Action Group (HAG) took the opportunity to ask festival-goers their views on homelessness. The HAG surveyed 77 people — 46 were local residents, six were homeless and 25 lived in neighbouring suburbs.

The survey's aim was to gauge community attitudes and perceptions about homelessness and to note any concerns or local solutions. People happily participated in the survey once they were assured that the HAG was not collecting money or trying to sign them up for anything.

Instead, respondents received a lolly for their efforts. The supply of the tasty treats had to be closely manned as the day progressed and many younger folk became all too aware of the sweet stash the HAG had at its stall!

The survey results reveal a real sense of empathy in our community for homeless and disadvantaged people.

Comments on homelessness included: "homeless people are in a desperate situation", "helpless and sad for them", "they seemed stressed and to be suffering" and "surviving day to day".



Spring Fling in Errol Street last October
Photo: Courtesy The Centre

The survey showed an understanding of some of the causes of homelessness in the community. These included "family breakdown", "addiction and mental health issues", "job loss" and "health issues".

The HAG sought to identify any residents' concerns about homelessness in the area. Some locals had experienced begging and occasional intimidating behaviour on public transport and the streets. Some noted they regularly "chat with homeless people at the tram stop and in the street".

Some respondents looked for solutions to local homelessness. Suggestions included a need for "more emergency housing", "more social and affordable housing", "more supported accommodation", "more opportunities for education and employment" and "more AOD and mental health services".

The HAG was encouraged by locals' keen participation in the survey. It plans to continue to consult with the community about homelessness in North and West Melbourne throughout the year.

A Health and Homelessness forum will be held on Wednesday 1 May at the North Melbourne Town Hall. If you would like further information on the HAG please email nicky.mccoll@vincentcare.org.au.

Nicky McColl Jones is the project worker with the Homelessness Action Group

HEAD NORTH TURN WEST

Steve Jasper

I've thrown a few parties in North and West Melbourne over the years — some successful, others lacklustre. Here are a few do's and don'ts that I've found useful for throwing successful parties.

DO — pay attention to the music you're playing. A few years ago I was hosting a party in West Melbourne and I got the idea into my head of playing a bit of ABBA. Trouble was, I chose ABBA's very last album, *The Visitors*, which is when they were all divorced, middle aged and absolutely detested the sight of each other. It opens with the title track in which Russian dissidents are dragged away to be tortured by the KGB. After that, the album gets depressing. Needless to say, it didn't set the

mood I wanted.

DON'T — serve fish, shellfish or anything vaguely aquatic. I do a wickedly good steamed mussel dish, but for every person who says "Yum, yum!", there'll be another who says "Oh, ick, fish!" Weird, huh? Even if you're doing a Swedish smorgasbord, avoid the herring — it'll only lead to heartache. Celery stalks, on the other hand, are pretty inoffensive, even to gluten-intolerant, lactose-intolerant, raw food vegans who only eat food harvested when the moon is in Pisces and the sun is in Virgo. So feel free to use them liberally.

DO — use square plates for your smorgasbord. You know how annoying it is when there are lots of gaps in between round plates on the buffet table? Square plates solve that problem perfectly, and I've had many compliments on their sensible design. You can probably get them at some place like Ikea, as long as you don't mind having an ABBA soundtrack to your purchasing. At least they won't play *The Visitors*.

DON'T — invite exes. Ever. I don't care how much people say that, no, everything is fine with them and their ex, no, really, they're now best of friends, do not chance this one. Trust me here. The last thing you want is for your evening shindig to be

described as "cathartic", when exes lay their souls bare and tell each other what they really thought about each other during their relationship. It sounds harsh, I know, but you really do have to pick sides here.

DO — warn friends about bluestone lanes. Outside my apartment in West Melbourne is a narrow bluestone alley, and this is the only means of access to my abode. You will need to warn women wearing high heels about this so that they either don sensible footwear (unlikely) or take their shoes off in the street. (Actually, this warning may apply to a few men as well, I know better than to ask.) The last thing you want is a guest arriving at your house nursing a twisted ankle.

So, to sum up: if you follow my guidelines, you will not have all four former members of ABBA turn up at your party, serenade you with depressing songs, fight with each other and throw herrings in a fit of rage or injure themselves through injudicious use of eight-inch platform heels.

Really, who wants to clean up pickled herring while someone is swearing in Swedish?

Steve Jasper writes regularly about life on the streets of North and West Melbourne



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HISTORY

Cable trams made tracks along our streets

Lorna Hannan

It is now a few years since my Uncle Neville (Clement Neville Govett) died. He became my uncle when he married my aunt, Leila Burns. He had left Melbourne years before, but remained the self-appointed family expert on our cable trams.

On his annual visits, he delighted in taking us to points of interest related to the story of Melbourne's cable transport system. If we did not go to an actual spot he would regale us with details of what we would have seen had we gone, but we were often to be found standing outside the former engine house on the corner of Queensberry and Abbotsford streets, or staring down at the asphalt covering the last remaining bits of cable under Abbotsford Street.

After Neville died, we realised that we had probably not gone often enough and did not know nearly as much as we should. Recently, however, I found notes I had taken as he talked to us one afternoon.

As I had noted at the time, although there were cable trams in Melbourne from as early as 11 November 1885, the North and West Melbourne lines did not open until March 1890. When they were first introduced, the trams travelled at about eight miles per hour. This later increased to some 13 miles per hour, but the West Melbourne line was always a trifle slower than the North line.

The early trams were called "trains". They were carried along by the use of a "grip" that was opened and closed to hold on to a moving cable under the road. The act of attaching the grip to the cable was a "pick up" and opening the grip to let go of the cable was a "throw". The cable itself was often called the "rope". The man responsible for all such manoeuvres was the "gripman".

After conductors were removed from Melbourne's electric trams, Neville was ever ready with details of the system in the good old cable tram days. No possibilities of fare evasion in those days. A conductor who set off from

Abbotsford Street had a batch of long, coloured trip slips pinned to his jacket and a punch strapped on over his shoulder. On the punch was a sort of clock face with two hands that moved forward each time it was clicked.

Unless my notes are quite wrong, a passenger could pay by producing a ticket or coin, but either way the conductor clipped out a number from the paper trip slip, and the clipped piece was stored inside the punch until the end of the journey. There the combination lock on the punch was opened and the numbers of clicks and clippings reconciled.

If a passenger paid a through fare, which involved changing trams, the trip slip (or ticket) had the original conductor's badge number in big black figures in the top right hand corner.

To get a picture of how trams operated in those days, imagine it is 1923 and you are taking a trip into the city on the North Melbourne line. You might walk up to Flemington Bridge (still there and with a railway station named after it) and watch while the "dummy" and "trailer" were pushed out of the car shed, coupled by hand and then drawn together with a hook, links and a turnbuckle device.

On getting the signal, the vehicle would be taken out and, after gripping the cable, would be drawn on to the wide stretch of Flemington Road and the journey would begin.

As you travelled along, you would see parkland on the left and residences and public houses on the right, and you would stop at Abbotsford Street. The cable would stay gripped while the tram (as it was by then known) took the curve.

At a number of points between there and Queensberry Street, passengers would be picked up and set down. Just before arriving at the corner, the gripman would throw the cable that had been in use, and the tram would be brought to a full stop.

Now was the moment to pick up a second cable, the one that would draw the tram to the city. This pick-up was done by hand before the tram turned into and travelled down Errol Street.



Drawing: Ava Macmaster

As the tram came close to Victoria Street, the cable was again released, and the vehicle coasted round the corner where the gripman picked the cable up again.

Along busy Victoria Street, there were two major stops — one at William Street, where the tram crossed the tracks of the newer electric line, and another at Elizabeth Street. Here there was often a wait for the flag man to signal that the city-bound North Melbourne tram could take a right hand turn into Elizabeth Street.

From there on down to Flinders Street there were both North Melbourne and Brunswick trams picking up and setting down passengers. The trams moved slowly enough for agile passengers to get on and off while they were still moving. On the return journey there would often be quite a crowd getting on at the Market.

Cable trams ran for about 50 years without much change to their design. Uncle Neville

liked to assert that this spoke volumes for the excellence of the original design and workmanship. He often referred to the night peace was declared at the end of World War 1 when there was memorable damage done to trams on both the West Melbourne and North Melbourne routes.

Recommended is a visit to the *Trams: Moving Pictures* exhibition, which will run until August at the Old Treasury Building Museum (20 Spring Street). You can also see a video, "Commuting by Cable", which includes some of Uncle Neville's footage.

And you can see "The Melbourne Cable Tramway System" on YouTube, including footage Neville took between 1933 and 1939.

Lorna Hannan is chair of the Hotham History Project

POLITICS & ENVIRONMENT

Regional Rail will shunt our local residents

Steve Jasper

The Regional Rail project is going full steam ahead. It will be built through West and North Melbourne, Footscray and Sunshine, and then link up with the Geelong line with a couple of new railway stations, making the journey to Geelong longer, if less congested.

If you want to see part of the Regional Rail project, go to North Melbourne station, down at the far end (near the escalators to platform six) and you'll see two freshly-laid tracks. Note that they're beside the station, not at the station, and there are no plans to build platforms for the Regional Rail.

The first problem is that there will be loss of amenity at the station. Currently, passengers travel to and from regional areas to the CBD, changing at North Melbourne and catching one of three services (Craigieburn, Sunbury or Upfield) to go through the loop.

With the Regional Rail in place, North Melbourne station will no longer be a transfer point, and passengers transferring from the loop will need to catch a Sunbury train to Footscray, which limits passengers to one line instead of three.

The Regional Rail Link Authority (RRLA) claims the project will result in less overcrowding for Sunbury trains, which is

reassuring. However, it seems odd not to build a couple of platforms at a busy hub station such as North Melbourne.

According to the Public Transport Users Association: "When the Regional Rail Link opens, Geelong line trains will run past North Melbourne without a stop, despite it being the best station for changes to the loop and other rail and bus services."

The 401 bus route (North Melbourne station-Royal Melbourne Hospital-Melbourne University) has been a resounding success since it started some years ago, moving people quickly and efficiently in peak hour to and from the hospital and university.

Passengers catching the Regional Rail will need to transfer at Footscray and catch a Sunbury train to North Melbourne to catch the 401 bus, so adding an extra step in the public transport link hardly makes things more efficient.

The RRLA notes that the 402 bus can be caught from Footscray station to the hospital and university. Those of us who catch the 402, the beloved "hospital bus", know it's a local community bus that meanders its way through North Melbourne and Kensington, stopping every few blocks, and is not the high volume 401 "people mover".

The second problem is extra traffic on the North Melbourne flyover. This was built in the early 1960s to cater for the new standard gauge

railway line to Sydney. It wasn't designed to carry high volumes of rail traffic, and it now has 10 to 20 trains running on it daily.

This will change with the Regional Rail project, which expects 150 passenger services per weekday, not counting freight trains. This means a jump in traffic on the flyover, and is likely to affect residents in West Melbourne,

especially Railway Place.

As one West Melbourne local points out, the suburb's demographic has altered considerably in recent years, with fewer older people and with more young families with children moving in. The potential effects of additional noise, as well as that of diesel fumes, on both adults and young children, is of



Health and Homelessness Community Forum

**Wednesday 1st May, 10am – 12pm
9.30am for registration**

The Meeting Room, North Melbourne Town Hall
Corner Queensberry and Errol Streets, North Melbourne

SPEAKERS

Adam Bandt MP

Jennifer Kanis MP

John Blewowski, CEO VincentCare Victoria

Other details and speakers to be confirmed

Enquiries to Nicky McColl Jones: nicky.mccoll@vincentcare.org.au

concern to many residents.

Another resident points out that last June the International Agency for Research on Cancer classified diesel engine exhaust as carcinogenic to humans, in the same class as asbestos, and linked it to lung cancer.

The RRLA asserts that "as with all major projects of this nature, a range of planning and environmental investigations and assessments were undertaken to inform the project", although a West Melbourne resident says the decision last May to run 150 passenger trains per weekday on the flyover was made before any air quality assessments had been

performed.

The third problem is the encroachment into Railway Place. Many West Melbourne residents (as well as music lovers) are up in arms over the proposal for a new track being laid over the top of Railway Place at the Dudley Street end. This means that the Regional Rail will be very close to Festival Hall, passing just 45 centimetres from it (centimetres, not metres!).

The sounds of regional and freight trains will hardly enhance the experience of listening to a band at Festival Hall, and neither the owners nor clientele will be particularly

thrilled. RRLA assures it has obtained the relevant planning and environmental approvals for the work in this area.

However, the question remains: is the regulator adequately doing its job? A big increase in freight trains with diesel fumes running just 13 metres from people's houses is a little close for comfort.

So, where are we? The RRLA promises less congestion for both regional and suburban passengers on the Craigieburn, Sunbury, Werribee and Williamstown lines. But the negatives include longer travelling times to Geelong and a lack of transfer at North Melbourne station or connection

with the 401 bus.

Of particular concern to West Melbourne locals are the plans to substantially increase rail traffic (with resulting increased diesel fumes) on the flyover, and an encroachment into the lower end of Railway Place.

The Regional Rail is like myki: a shiny, expensive white elephant, causing more problems than it solves. It certainly leaves a few headaches for West Melbourne residents in or near Railway Place, especially those with young families.

Steve Jasper is politics and environment editor for the News

Save our environment and finite resources

Steve Jasper

Gabrielle Stannus from Sustainability Street, a local group that fosters a healthier, safer and more environmentally sustainable place in which to live, has some very definite views on how to be more eco-friendly.

She believes there are five simple ways we can minimise our impact on the environment — and also save a bit of money in the process. They are simple techniques that everyone can use.

First — monitor your energy consumption. Go over your bills to get some idea of a baseline of how much you are using per quarter, for both electricity and gas, and see if there's room for improvement. This is particularly important coming into the winter months when power usage increases.

There are a few easy ways to reduce power use. One is to wear a jumper in winter rather than heat the house and wear t-shirts. Another is to switch appliances such as televisions and computers off rather than have them on standby — this can cut your power bills by 10 per cent.

You can get a free powerboard that

switches off automatically by phoning Live Green with Less on 1300 781 998.

If you want to ensure you are maximising your energy efficiency, Ecosave will carry out a free energy audit. Phone Ecosave on 1300 55 77 64.

Second — sign up for GreenPower, a government-accredited program that enables your energy provider to purchase renewable energy. No, it doesn't mean that your electricity has "green electrons", but it does mean that your energy comes from renewable sources. Sources such as coal seam gas, biomass using native rainforests, coal fired, natural gas, oil and nuclear are all prohibited under the scheme.

Phone GreenPower on 8626 8700 for more information.

Third — think about food miles. Food that is trucked in long distances, or worse, if it's flown in, results in a lot of carbon emissions. Eating local produce is much more sustainable.

And what could be more local than produce grown in your own garden? A few vegetables and herbs are easy to look after, either in your backyard or grown in pots on the balcony.

Another option is to buy a box of organic fruit and vegetables that are locally produced,

such as at the Roller Door Café, 13 Stawell Street, West Melbourne.

If you've got a bit of a sweet tooth, you can even sponsor a beehive for Rooftop Honey. They maintain the beehive on your property and you get some of the honey, plus you get to name the queen. And who wouldn't want a queen named after them?

Fourth — use public transport, cycle or walk. North and West Melbourne have amazing transport infrastructure because of proximity to the CBD — there's lots of trains and trams, and a few buses. For most of us, there's really no reason to use a car to get around.

Cycling is also a great way to get around the area, and it keeps you fit as well. Melbourne Bike Share offers subscriptions for a day, a week or a year, with trips capped at 30 minutes. Of course, there are helmet vendors nearby. Yes, you really must wear a helmet, and they're only \$5!

You can also download an app (Spotcycle) that lets you locate nearby bike stations. There are a few bike stations in the neighbourhood, including one at North Melbourne railway station, although there isn't one closer to Errol Street. Wouldn't it be great to have one there?

Then, of course, there's good old-fashioned walking. You can keep fit while creating

absolutely no carbon emissions. It's also a favourite pastime for Gabrielle. She says: "Being able to walk to places clears my head." It's also good for the cardiovascular system, and helps keep weight down.

Every Wednesday at 10am the walking group leaves The Centre (58 Errol Street) and it's free. For more information, phone 9328 1126.

Fifth — minimise water usage. This makes sense given we live on the world's driest inhabited continent where bushfires have raged for much of the summer. Yet Victorians are still using, on average, more than 150 litres a day. Looking at your water bill can tell you how much water you are using.

The Savewater website has lots of simple tips and tricks for reducing water usage in the home and garden. Tips include fixing a leaking tap (one can consume 20,000 litres a year) and timing showers. You can get a water-efficient showerhead for free from Live Green with Less on 1300 781 998.

So there! Five simple and easy things you can do to minimise your impact on the environment.

Steve Jasper is politics and environment editor for the News

TRAVEL & FOOD

Nizams serves up Indian food to your taste

Katrina Kinkade-Sharkey

PARENTAL inspiration is universal — just ask the two local graduates who run a popular new Indian restaurant on Victoria Street, just a few doors west of Errol.

Nizams' joint partners, Raheem Khaja, 31, and Pushparaj Velyudham, 30, were born in India's genteel Hyderabad before travelling here to extend their tertiary studies — Raheem in finance and "Pushpa" in medical science.

"We've been friends for five or six years since we arrived as uni students," Pushpa says, settling in to an empty table during Nizams' mid-afternoon lull. "Raheem came to study his MBA and I did my master's in biotechnology in Adelaide."

"Then I moved to Melbourne to work for Monash Uni at The Alfred, where I'm doing clinical research into HIV. We investigate patients' responses to new drugs and we've achieved major breakthroughs in research here, so HIV's incidence is well-controlled in Australia," he says.

Raheem entered the insurance sector with Allianz Australia, then recently joined NAB's MLC wealth management division. "Just managing people's money," he explains — but he's also a big-time foodie.

So, having both followed specialist academic studies and substantial careers, why food?

Raheem explains: "My mum's the main culinary inspiration at home, and the entire family — in fact, the entire Hyderabad community —

uses her superb expertise when it comes to parties and celebrations, so it must be in my blood."

"Mum's also a social worker, so she goes into slums and encourages parents to send their kids to school rather than out to work so that they have a future."

Mrs Minnath Khaja and her friends then invite children into their homes. "This shows them at that early age how school can change their future. The women show these poverty-stricken kids the benefits of education," he beams proudly.

Raheem's mother has not yet visited Nizams. "Mum's only seen our place in pictures, but it's fair to say she's proud," Raheem grins. He certainly celebrates her culinary style on the restaurant's menu.

"Our food here is mostly vegetarian and vegan. Hyderabad's food style is mainly non-vegetarian, but we've adapted our menu to suit the large proportion of Melbourne vegans and vegetarians."

"Everyone loves our malia kofta, a vegetarian delight with cheese. Our customers' favourite vegan dish is khatti daal, a thick and tangy lentil soup full of spices. There's also aloo baigan, which is mixed potato and eggplant cooked with curry leaves. A quick, delicious dish."

"Then there's our massive choice of non-veg dishes," Pushpa interjects. "They're headlined by the biryani, which comes in two styles of lamb and chicken. We also have a vegetarian style, but they're all marinated overnight and then cooked gently with rice."

"And daal is a traditional festive dish back

home; it was developed hundreds of years ago in southern India," he adds.

Another specialty is a delicious chicken achari, featuring a plethora of spices in a traditional pickle-based curry, served with saffron rice or garlic naan. (It's yum!) And the lamb tadka, tempered with cumin seeds, mustard, curry leaves, whole red chillies and crushed black pepper with a dash of lemon is exquisite.

That's but a mini-taste of Nizams' menu.

Nizams Indian Restaurant & Take-Away. Shop 5/520-528 Victoria Street, North Melbourne, Ph: 9077 1073. Website: www.nizams.com.au. Nizams also caters for external functions.

Katrina Kinkade-Sharkey writes regularly for the News

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Libraries Laotian gave free travel quotient

Nancy Lane

For the three months from November to February, I worked as an Australian Business Volunteer assisting the National University of Laos in Vientiane to develop a new library school as part of the Geography department. My three-month assignment to train six geography lecturers to teach librarianship was challenging, but also a lot of fun.

Teaching courses in online searching and digital libraries was particularly difficult because the Internet connections were totally unreliable. Sometimes they worked, sometimes they didn't. Thank heavens for my iPhone, which ran on a slightly more reliable 3G network — I had to use it quite often to prepare materials for class.

Luckily, the Internet was working when I demonstrated the value of a union catalogue. From Laos, I looked up Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* on the National Library of Australia's Trove system, linked through to the Melbourne Library Service, requested it at the North Melbourne branch, and suspended the request until I returned to Melbourne. Amazing!

Although Laos has had a long tradition of wat (temple) libraries with manuscripts written in Sanskrit or Pali languages on palm leaves, libraries accessible to the public are much more

recent. Nonetheless, they are undertaking some very interesting projects with international aid.

For example, the National Library of Laos has made collecting trips to record traditional Lao music, and it maintains a music archive accessible through a well-organised database. The library has also microfilmed many palm leaf manuscripts from wats around Laos, which they are now digitising and making available online. (See www.laomanuscripts.net/en/index.)

The central library at the National University of Laos is leading the way in setting up a union catalogue for 20 libraries around the country. It is also developing an online digital repository of student theses. However, these projects are only partly completed and very short of skilled staff.

When I wasn't teaching, I made good use of the local swimming pool. It was very hot and humid when I first arrived, so the pool was bath temperature, full of children and seemed to contain more chlorine than water. There were no lane markers or life-guards, and people were swimming up and down, across and every which way — so I really missed the cleanliness and orderliness of the North Melbourne Recreation Centre pool.

But, during my stay, the temperature became more pleasant as the Lao people began to rug up in jackets and neck scarves. They didn't think of swimming in the "winter", so the pool was a

perfect temperature for lap swimming, and I was often the only one in it.

I also had time for three excursions. The first was to the province of Xieng Khuang, an eight-hour trip over an incredibly winding mountain road. This was part of a geography research field trip, and included very interesting tours of local communities that had prospered through microfinance initiatives such as silk weaving or raising pigs and chickens. We also visited the Plain of Jars, an early archaeological site featuring huge jars carved from stone, some as large as three metres.

The second trip was to Luang Prabang, a beautiful old French colonial city at the confluence of the Mekong and the Nam Khan rivers. It is UNESCO heritage listed and deservedly so. There are interesting old temples, wonderful restaurants and fascinating markets.

The third trip was to Vang Vieng, which has amazing karst scenery. It used to cater primarily to backpackers who inner-tubed down the Nam Song river, drinking shots of local rice whisky at all the bars along the way then partying all night. After 20 people drowned last year, the government closed down the bars. It was great for us older folk, who were happy to go kayaking, hiking and caving, and to drink the occasional Beer Lao.

The food over there was outstanding and featured some very unusual dishes including



Hand-carved stone jars at the Plain of Jars

Photo: Nancy Lane

ingredients such as buffalo fat, river moss and lam wood. The French influence is still strong, with baguettes and pate sold in local market stalls. Coffee is strong and sweet. Lao people simply did not believe me when I told them I wanted plain milk instead of sweetened condensed milk. They always put a pinch of salt in my coffee as well!

Laos is a country with many problems and contradictions, along with limited infrastructure, all of which can be hugely frustrating. But it is also warm and welcoming to foreigners. If you ever have the chance to visit there, do!

Nancy Lane writes regularly for the News and takes health classes for women at The Centre.

Becak drivers just jog along in Yogyakarta

KF Loke

A group of sunburnt men furiously pedal out of their homes into the faint light offered by daybreak over central Java, Indonesia.

Missing the morning rush hour crowd of Yogyakarta city, often a good hour or more from their homes in the countryside, would be highly regrettable for these men who operate what essentially is a foot-powered taxi service. Missing the shrinking numbers of tourists, however, would be plain inexcusable.

Hardworking but impoverished, lowly educated but highly street-smart, and often carrying an air of desperation balanced by a quiet optimism, they ferry both locals and tourists on what is essentially an inverted tricycle with a crude passenger carriage mounted up front.

They are drivers of becak, a term synonymously referring to both man and his machine, and an integral part of the Yogyakartan economy. For tourists willing to forgo air-conditioned comforts and the safety of packaged tours, becak offer close-up views into the microcosmic interactions of Yogyakarta's

community.

One of these men, Pak Wadarni, is slightly less anxious than the others as he speeds towards the Prawirotaman tourist district. Keeping on friendly terms with the staff of budget guesthouse Wisma Arys has paid off — he has been informed that a tourist couple fresh from the steppes of Borobudur has arrived in town and needs transportation for a day. While he has little confidence in the English he has picked up from the streets and a few classes, he can't turn down the job. Tourists pay everyone well. He has to play his part.

"Morning, hello. Welcome to Yogyakarta," he greets the couple in awkward sounding but perfectly grammatical English as they emerge from the guesthouse and clamber aboard. While foreign tourists are the becak's primary source of income, many are still shunning Indonesia years after the Bali bombings, and recent earthquakes and the Mt Merapi eruptions give even less reason to visit. He needs to make a good impression.

"Selamat Pagi. Dah makan ke," replies the female half of the couple, returning the morning greeting before asking if he has already had breakfast. Visibly relieved to be



Becak drivers ferrying tourists along the streets of Yogyakarta

Photo: Trinity Chua

able to communicate in his mother tongue, he enthusiastically rattles off a rough plan for a single day's tour of the city's choicest sights.

Men such as Wadarni know instinctively how to wend their way through the ceaseless traffic of the city, brushing past their motorised competition of tour buses and motorcycle ojeks and into mud tracks and back lanes. He stops at Taman Sari, otherwise known as "Water Castle".

He hands them off to a local guide whose speciality lies in recounting tales of an early sultan who made the palace a pleasure garden for his harem. In turn, the guide recommends the pair to a traditional batik artist's studio to purchase a metre-long Javanese interpretation of the Last Supper on dyed cloth. Working like a well-oiled machine, Yogyakarta's tourist industry is all on display.

Rupiah are exchanged, cautiously and calculatedly, with each party in a delicate balancing act between business, tourist and becak. Gouging a tourist early on leads to tighter wallets and less generosity. A wily tourist exploiting this courtesy will soon be greeted by increasingly inflated figures. The becak brings customers to the door and receives a kickback on sales, but just as easily takes them away.

No one upsets the balance. Everyone smiles. Not every favour needs to be part of a transaction.

A little attempt at communication often results

in a little connection between people, and tourists who befriend their drivers often gain a front-seat window into local life. The tastiest roadside gudeg (a jackfruit curry served with rice) in town becomes part of the tour, with authenticity proven by the throngs of hungry locals parked around the pusheart stall.

An additional pair of eyes brings as much needed success in deterring pickpockets in the Malioboro shopping district as any expert advice telling the difference between ordinary plated steel from silverware, and cheap painted concrete from lavastone.

Watching the sporting exchange between driver and a female shopkeeper as they haggle over a pair of worn jeans is a joy to behold. Their abject poverty is irrelevant. Missing the raw humanity inherent in such an experience? Inexcusable.

"This is not the amount, you're mistaken," Wadarni stammers in Indonesian as the day winds to a close for the tourist couple. They had just paid him Rp150,000 (A\$15), a figure more than double the Rp65,000 quoted and arranged by the guesthouse, and many times the average day's earnings for a driver.

"Just take it, you've earned it," reply the couple, with a smile.

KF Loke writes regularly for the News.

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LIFE IN YEAR 7

Claudio Palmeri

I knew the day would come. I know nothing lasts for ever, but I cannot believe high school has come around so fast. I never knew I could feel so many emotions all at once — uncertainty, fear and excitement.

Would I fit into my new high school? Would I be accepted for who I am and what I believe in? Would I be in a position to make a contribution? The only thing that got me through these feelings and questions was knowing that many other new students felt the same way. So, I embarked on my first day with hope and faith in the system.

My greatest fears on the day were whether my locker would be too high and whether I would be able to get the lock opened in time for class. Would I be able to find my way around the school and locate all my classes? Would I remember the teachers'

names? Believe me, these are big thoughts for a kid, ones that can sometime stop you from sleeping.

Well, all I can say is the first day was fantastic! High school has proved to be everything and more. My fears of the unknown were wasted emotions. Did I reach my locker? Yes. Did I have difficulty opening my locker? Yes — but it wasn't a drama. Did I find the subject rooms? No — but as a class we stuck together, and were all lost and found.

As for learning the teachers' names, well, every teacher made me feel so comfortable that it was like meeting a new friend, and how can you forget a friend's name?

So, I challenge all new students to make a pledge to not be afraid of the unknown. Make the education system work for you and take every opportunity to create a great and successful future. Enjoy what school has to offer, the life-long friendships you make, the moments you fail but learn something, and the moments you succeed.

My aim for high school is to enjoy every moment because time passes fast — but memories last forever.

Claudio Palmeri will write regularly about his 2013 journey through year 7

Bright students shine with sparkling results

Jodie McLeod

The classrooms at St Aloysius College are full of students eager to tackle the challenges of the new school year.

Year seven girls just starting secondary school can find embarking on their new six-year journey to be both exciting and daunting.

It was fitting that all St Aloysius' students were reminded of the purpose of the journey when last year's college dux, Jennifer Thai, recently offered them some sound advice.

Jennifer received an excellent ATAR of 97 in last year's VCE and gave this year's students some pointers. "The year ahead may seem like a struggle, maybe comparable to a battlefield, but don't give up. If you receive a grade that lowers your self-esteem, don't brood as there's always a chance to redeem yourself," she advised.

She shared with the girls some handy hints that allowed her to win a place to study communication design at Monash this year. "Be diligent and do heaps of exams for each subject if you're dedicated and eager to achieve great

results."

Students listened keenly to Jennifer as she spoke. "You can never stop learning. Stay curious. Stay hungry for knowledge," she said.

Last year's overall VCE results were very pleasing. All St Aloysius students received a first round tertiary offer with 38 per cent performing within the top 20 per cent of Victorian students.

"We are extremely proud of the students at the College," said principal Ms Mary Farah. "Our girls performed very well, which has provided them with great opportunities for further study. We look forward to hearing of their continued success," she said.

Last year's St Aloysius VCE students are undertaking a variety of studies this year, including commerce at Melbourne and arts-business at Monash. One is taking a double degree in biomedical science and engineering at Monash.

"We are confident our girls will continue to achieve great things," Ms Farah said.

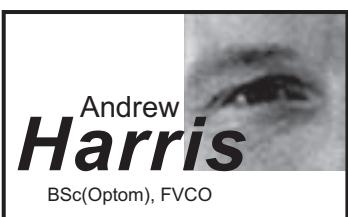
Jodie McLeod is marketing manager at St Aloysius College



New St Aloysius principal Mary Farah (third from left) with seven of the school's high achievers in last year's VCE

Photo: Jodie McLeod

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Just a walk in the park

Zac Cox

Early in March, 30 boys from Simonds Catholic College, West Melbourne completed a two-day bushwalk in Wilson's Promontory.

The bushwalk was part of Simonds' leadership challenge and one of many activities to be offered to students this year. Others will include sleeping rough, preparing lunch for the homeless and undertaking fundraising and advocacy work.

The overnight trek a fortnight ago took the boys along the much-loved Prom's famous walking tracks. It not only tested their bushwalking skills but also required them to handle all the testing conditions of a long hike.

The students had actually prepared for a totally different walk, but their planned three-day walk up Victoria's highest peak, Mt Bogong, was cancelled due to bushfires. And that's how the boys ended up carrying their packs on the Prom!

Year 10 student Isaac Montebello, 15, had been eagerly looking forward to a bushwalk of any colour. "We trained for weeks and I knew I would face a struggle with myself wherever we went, but it was something I really wanted to do," he said.

Isaac and two fellow year 10 students, Alfonso Zampogna and Andrew Doan, embarked on regular lunchtime training sessions while carrying 12kg packs.

Teacher Robert McConnon coordinated the hike. "From the outset, the group needed to be synchronised and to support each other through many challenges. The lessons learnt spilled over to give the boys leadership skills, both in the



Isaac Montebello (left) and Alfonso Zampogna

Photo: Robert McConnon

classroom and in life," he said.

"We wanted to develop a program that challenged the boys, both mentally and physically. The aim was to cultivate compassion, mateship and selflessness, qualities not always taught in mainstream schooling.

"At Simonds we believe these qualities are important skills for a successful life. So we created a program to teach them," Robert added.

The boys who walked the Prom now have a real spring in their step. It seems that Simonds' innovative program is working.

Zac Cox was the teacher-in-charge of Simonds Catholic College's Wilson's Prom hike

A focus on photos caught the life of our city

Jodie McLeod

Cindy Chen's love of photography was sparked when her parents gave her a digital camera for her 11th birthday.

The St Aloysius College year 11 student has certainly retained that early interest. Last year she was a finalist in a competition run by the Australian Academy of Design Photography.

Cindy then spotted a notice in the school library of a "Melbourne in a Moment" competition run by the Melbourne Library Service. Entrants were challenged to capture the spirit of the city.

"I thought I'd give it a go," she says. "I tried to capture one of the art sculptures designed to put an artistic touch on Melbourne. I felt it displayed how people in our city are able to create something unique."

When the awards were announced last

December, Cindy won the people's choice award after she received many Facebook likes for her entry. For her prize, she received a \$50 voucher.

Cindy happily reveals her delight in taking photos. "What I like about photography is that you can always capture many different features in a photo, and it's also about capturing that specific moment in life.

"The photograph will be remembered forever. Photography is one of the art forms that we constantly use in our everyday lives to display our memories and the love of things we want to remember and treasure," she says.

Cindy's personal focus is taking photos of the natural environment such as sunsets, flowers and panoramic views of the sky and ocean. Her ambition is to become a professional photographer who travels the world.

Jodie McLeod is marketing manager at St Aloysius College



Cindy Chen (left) with her proud mother

Photo: Courtesy St Aloysius

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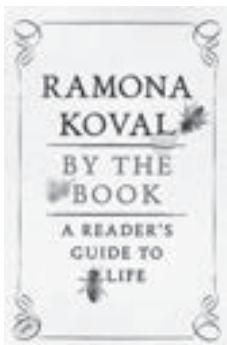
Chris Saliba

**This is How You Lose Her**by Junot Diaz
(Faber Fiction,
RRP: \$27.99)

Junot Diaz's naturalistic prose snaps and pops in this brilliant second collection of short stories. *This is How You Lose Her* deals with the serious problems of race, death, family and the immigrant experience while also maintaining a refreshingly light and energetic tone. Diaz doesn't show off or strive for smart literary effects, but rather goes straight to the heart of the matter.

There are nine stories in total, mostly written in the first person voice of Yunior, a young Dominican immigrant struggling with family problems and an often turbulent love life. The backdrop to these stories is a rather ugly, post-industrial American landscape that Yunior must try to adapt to.

The overall literary effect is that of direct speech rather than lifeless words on the page. Diaz uses a lot of Dominican-American slang and Dominican words and expressions to add a lively, streetwise humour to the serious issues his fiction confronts. You don't understand the Dominican language of course, but it all adds greatly to the feel and musical quality of the writing.

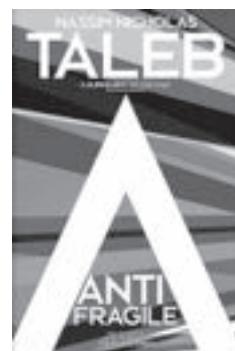
**By The Book: A Reader's Guide to Life**by Ramona Koval
(Text Publishing,
RRP: \$29.99)

A memoir centred around the love of books and reading risks being affected or precious. You worry that there may be endless name-dropping or tiresome hymns to Proust. Thankfully, Ramona Koval, the ABC's former long-time *The Book Show* presenter, knows the right mix of memoir, literature and plain storytelling to create something entirely her own.

By The Book speaks of personal obsessions, traumatic family history and reading as a way of life. As a broadcast journalist, Koval was always breezy and devoid of pretentiousness. On the page her style is warm and candid.

Much of *By The Book* centres on her parents, both of whom were Holocaust survivors. The Nazis and the death camps were never discussed at home; it was too traumatic.

For fans of Koval's Radio National book shows, this memoir will surely be a treat. And for those who know little of her work, *By The Book* has much to recommend it.

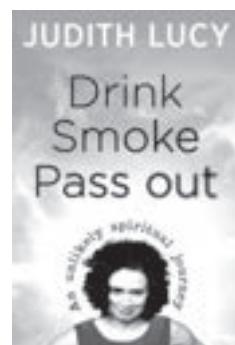
**Antifragile: How to Live in a World We Don't Understand**by Nassim Nicholas Taleb
(Allen Lane,
RRP: \$29.99)

The basic premise of *Antifragile* can perhaps be summed up in the famous saying by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche: "That which does not kill me only makes me stronger".

Nassim Nicholas Taleb maintains that people often confuse the opposite of fragile as robustness. This is wrong, we are told. The robust only resists shocks and stressors, while the "antifragile" actually bounces back even stronger.

Antifragile argues that mistakes, setbacks and misfortunes can be good things if we learn to profit by them. The only way to become "antifragile" is to repeatedly test ourselves against reality. In this ultimately positive and life-affirming book, experience is championed over theory, risk over safety.

This is a vibrant and contentious book that is hard to categorise. It is also an enormously satisfying read as Taleb riffs on a range of subjects. You may wrestle with a lot of *Antifragile*'s ideas and often find yourself flustered in disagreement, but there is much food for thought. Its style is busy, bossy, argumentative, blunt, humorous and entertaining. I felt happier having read it.

**Drink, Smoke, Pass Out**by Judith Lucy
(Viking,
RRP: \$29.99)

When Judith Lucy was working in commercial radio and regaling listeners with stories of her drunken escapades, people would write in asking if she was okay. After reading *Drink, Smoke, Pass Out*, it seems clear she was anything but.

There is a lot of misery behind the gags and self-deprecating humour in this second memoir. Lucy's twenties and thirties, as she describes them, were a blur of cigarettes, booze and hangovers.

What prompted the sudden spiritual journey? When Lucy lost both her parents, she was knocked for six. This made her question her very existence. She discovered yoga as a way of becoming healthier, then she moved onto meditation.

Lucy has now cut back on the drink and is more at peace with life. However, this hasn't dampened her martini-dry humour. The trademark quips fly thick and fast, making *Drink, Smoke, Pass Out* a very funny book.

Chris Saliba is co-owner of North Melbourne Books. He writes regular reviews for the News

The Home Place

And maybe I'll think of you, from time to time.

Your gleaming grins and crinkled eyes
unmarred by the passing years, at least to me.

The sun did shine. And birds did sing. And
daisy chains were made in front yards.

Although he thinks he can take you,
by extending his cold hand and clutching yours, and pulling you
into the folds of his arms when the hours come due,
you never really left. I see you everywhere.

You are all four seasons.
You are all life.

Now the absence comes. And instead of your hazy horizons
I see red and sand, and it rolls across the
Hills — the dunes — like
a different sort of mist.
Your face is amongst it somewhere
Ravaged and undefined.
But still it remains. As it always will.
Part of nature's very fabric.
Part of earth.

Part of my heart.

Megan McCormick

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View of the new Errol Street park before its opening last month

Photo: Courtesy RAiD

Autumn

As leaves drift gently to the ground
And trees grow bare without a sound
The rain begins to fall more oft
Sunlight is dappled and wind blows soft
Fires are lit and hearths stay warm
As children sit by them, safe from the storm
The woodland colours from green to gold
Do change, for autumn is here I'm told

Ava Macmaster



RAiD members protest against Woolworths' development

Photo: Courtesy RAiD



Lord Mayor Robert Doyle (fourth from right) at park opening

Photo: Courtesy RAiD

Emily hits sweet notes as Angels' guardian

Gainore Atkins

I typed the words "singing" and "wellbeing" into a popular search engine and got over two million responses in under 0.15 seconds, which only goes to prove that singing is more than just making a bit of noise or something to be enjoyed by professional entertainers.

Emily Hayes, the musical director of Errol's Angels Community Choir, has watched the choir grow over its short life of 12 years and then develop over the past five into something that has given many people an opportunity to sing and enjoy a rewarding pastime, whether they are able to read music or not. Many of us sing along by ear, and enjoy ourselves no end.

Emily had many jobs before becoming involved with music. She was a "checkout chick" and a waitress at various times in her youth, and she initially studied hotel management. Finally, in her early twenties, she decided to follow her heart and returned to university to study music.

She is a musical director of two other choirs: "Mums and Bubs", a singing group

in Heidelberg, and The Rogues. She is also a member of the Prana House Choir in Thornbury. Her childhood home was full of music, and her parents now both sing in choirs themselves.

Emily's philosophy about singing is that it's

a birthright. Everyone has the right to sing. "If you can talk, you have all you need to come along to choir," she says. She believes there are many benefits associated with singing with a group, not the least of which is the sense of social connection.



Emily Hayes (fifth from left of the Angels sporting wings) smiles beatifically

Photo: Deb Williams

Singing in harmony with people teaches you how to be part of a whole, while learning the songs and rehearsing is also good for your memory. Singing increases your sense of wellbeing and happiness. Members of the Angels are often heard to say they feel more relaxed at the end of the night.

Emily also believes that the vibration of singing (the effect on all the cells of the body) assists with the healing process. We members of Errol's Angels are fortunate to have someone as skilled and enthusiastic as Emily to direct and oversee our choir.

We are always looking for new members to come and join us, and with Emily at the helm, there is nothing to fear. If you are interested in coming along for a sing-a-long, please contact Kath on 0408 564 213 for a chat and general information.

The Angels rehearse and just generally enjoy fellow singers' company every Thursday night during school terms, between 7.00pm and 9.00pm at the Maternal & Child Health Centre in Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne. All are welcome.

Gainore Atkins is a member of Errol's Angels

Lover to Lover

My hands are running through your hair. It's thick.
No it's long. No! yours is long and yours is thick.
Your cheeks have faint flush. No! Your cheeks are faint. His not so much.
Not you you. The other you.
I hold your hand even though I shouldn't. I should be holding his. I should be running my hands through his your hair, not yours.
"I've known her longer."
"Good for you."
"We have something together."
"I'll bet you do."
Now you're angry. And you're angry.
I'm angry. Why do you always do this to us? You always say something to aggravate him. To upset me. Darling, you're the one who's the most distraught now...
But still I comfort you. I squeeze your arm, no, your arm... no!
I hold your hand while I squeeze your arm. It's ok. It's ok.
I love you.
I love you.
I won't leave you, never.
I can't do this anymore.
I will.
I just can't.
And when I lie in bed that night. Holding him. I think of you. His eyes were red and watery.

His eyes were scared and fierce. Burning into mine trying to determine something...anything
It could have been you I held tonight.
I'm glad I'm with you tonight.
So very glad.

Megan McCormick