

Young Neil Cole was not such a merry old soul

Maurice Gaul

Neil Cole recalls the nightmare of being trapped on a Williamstown roundabout. "I was so depressed I didn't know which way to go." Emotionally paralysed, he circled and circled endlessly. It was one of his darkest moments.

Neil has lived an extraordinary life. At times he has soared, politically and creatively, while at other times chronic mental illness has plunged him into the dark night of the soul. Perhaps the one constant is that North Melbourne has been his home for 45 years.

"I was 11 when the family arrived in North in 1968. As a kid I sold papers on the corner outside the North baths and outside the Homebush Hotel. We first lived at the local commission flats, and of course I followed North in the footy."

He was 16 when he first experienced the mental illness that has blighted his life. "On a visit to the Tiwi Islands I had my first episode of mania cum psychosis. I couldn't sleep, was delusional and obsessed with Jesus. I was mesmerised by the sea and I would play *When I'm Calling You* endlessly."

The family moved to Woodend in 1974 and he started at a new school. "I was depressed and my parents were fighting a lot. My relationship with my father was tense and we argued a lot about politics. It was very unpleasant," he says.

Next year he began law at Melbourne. He missed lectures, was unable to sleep and was often delusional. In the depths of depression, he began an endless search for help. "I went to GPs, hypnotherapists, counsellors, psychiatrists, Chinese herbalists, acupuncturists and tarot care readers. They were all hopeless."

Only once did he find a sympathetic ear. "Dr Andrew Shipley from Woodend was the only person who ever sat down with me and talked to me and listened," he says quietly.

Paralysed by lethargy, depression and a compulsion to self-mutilate, Neil was also tortured by dysfunctional sexual thoughts. "In fact I was suffering from melancholia — a serious mental illness where one is suicidal and can't get out of bed or see the word in a rational way."

"My low self esteem led me to use eye shadow. I would shine my shoes obsessively and wear perfumes in a search for purity," he says candidly.

In 1977, in third-year law, Neil became an unlikely soldier when he joined the Army Reserve. He recalls breaking down in tears on the rifle range. "Partly it was due to the outline of the body on the target, but I was also severely depressed."

He joined the North Melbourne branch of the ALP in 1980 and remains a member, 33 years later. "If there's anywhere you would feel at home with a mental illness, it's the Labor party," he says grimly.

In 1981, just qualified as a lawyer, he started the Flemington Community Legal Centre. He had found his niche. "I was a combination of a social worker, youth worker and lawyer — what I'd always wanted to be."

Most clients' cases were alcohol or drug



Playwright Neil Cole is served a morning coffee by Alamie Wardan at Places and Faces

Photo: Jim Weatherill

related, but he recalls defending a man who had stolen a tram. "I argued that he had pulled up at all the stops, picked up passengers and got to the terminus on time," he laughs.

"I was so sick, so low, and couldn't find help," he says. Yet he continued to function and, in 1985, was elected to the Melbourne City Council. "It ruined my sleep patterns but I liked it; I got involved in anti-nuclear issues and had good friends on Council like Dick Wynne."

Nearly 30 years later, he can laugh at the absurdity of the meetings. "Once, after five hours, we were still on the first of 122 items. And once I returned from overseas to a Council brawl over a green traffic arrow off Royal Parade."

Amazingly, his political career was on the rise. He gained Labor pre-selection for Melbourne and won the seat in the 1988 State election. "I was very manic at the time, not sleeping and obsessively listening to songs from *The Gondoliers*," he recalls.

After Labor lost government late in 1992, leader Joan Kirner made Neil shadow attorney-general. Then, just months later, a life-changing event occurred. "In just 40 minutes, Dr John Garland diagnosed me with manic depression, now called bipolar disorder."

Finally, after 35 years, his mental illness had been diagnosed and could be treated. "He put me on lithium, which controlled the mania but not the depression. Two years later, I found a new psychiatrist and still see her."

Neil continued in his high-profile shadow role while severely depressed then, after a marriage separation, lived in a cheap room in a shared house. Then, in 1995, his political career came crashing down. A dispute with party leader John Brumby over censorship led to his resignation as shadow attorney-general.

Three days later, the situation worsened. "Brumby's staff defamed me by briefing the media that I was irrational and a ticking time bomb," he says. Political pain had become deeply personal.

Severely depressed, Neil spent three weeks in Melbourne Clinic where he befriended notorious gangland figure Alphonse Gangitano. "He thought someone was trying to kill him so I offered to swap beds, because I simply didn't care if I got killed," he says dryly.

Neil returned to politics as a backbencher and gained a swing to retain Melbourne in 1996 before losing Labor pre-selection in 1998. His obsessive behaviour and depression had returned. "I was obsessed with cleaning my Mazda, but I couldn't get it clean enough so I sold it."

Yet, as his political sun was setting, there was a creative dawning. "I was never good at English, but, when I was prescribed lithium, I discovered I could write dialogue," Neil smiles as he recalls that epiphany.

"My writing is the biggest thing that's happened to me. I've got a good memory, good writing genes and a passion for issues." He grins ruefully as he recalls maxing out his

credit card on books on etymology and transcribing them in his best cursive script.

Now a leading playwright, Neil's writing career is flourishing with 15 of his plays having been performed to critical acclaim all over Australia. "Other than my two boys, writing is the most important thing to me now."

He feels his best play is *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann*. "I met and wrote about two Auschwitz survivors and their friendship with me was an extraordinary experience," he says. "I'm now working on a Gallipoli trilogy, touching on Churchill, war historian C.E.W. Bean and my stretcher-bearer grandfather."

When not penning plays, Neil is heavily involved in his advocacy work and research into mental illness. "I've never stopped since I went public as the first politician to come out with a chronic disorder," he says.

His involvement began in 1999 at the Mental Health Research Institute in Carlton before moving to The Alfred as consumer consultant and researcher in 2005 after Monash made him an associate professor.

He is now back at the Institute where he writes, promotes Alzheimer's research and works as consumer consultant. "I see several people a day with depression, schizophrenia, whatever. And I help them."

Maurice Gaul is editor of the News. In 1974 he taught Neil Cole year 12 English at Kyneton High School

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.

Finance

The *News* is a non-profit organisation working as a program of The Centre. Funding is by way of a limited quota of advertising, a grant from Melbourne City Council, sponsorships, subscriptions and occasional donations.

News subscriptions

If you would like to receive the *North and West Melbourne News* by mail, the rate is \$10 for four copies sent anywhere in Australia or pro rata for part of the calendar year. The *News* is distributed free throughout North and West Melbourne. Further copies are available from The Centre and the North Melbourne Library.

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Community announcements are published free of charge.

For more information phone 9329 1627 or email nwmnews@centre.org.au.

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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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Production team: Jennifer Choat, Janet Graham, Rene Heeps, Ava Macmaster and Jim Weatherill. Peter Alsen provided professional assistance with layout.

Supported by the City of Melbourne



Printed by Express Print
5 Jones Road, Morwell 3844
Circulation 6000

Please deliver contributions, letters and feedback to:

North and West Melbourne News
58 Errol Street, North Melbourne 3051
Email: mauriceg@bigpond.com
Telephone: 9328 1126

**Copy deadline for September 2013 edition:
Wednesday 14 August****Advertisers:****Wednesday 7 August**

Publication date: Thursday 12 September

Dates for last edition of the year

Copy deadline 6 November, publication 5 December

www.centre.org.au



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Melbourne Osteoporosis Support Group

The Melbourne Osteoporosis Support Group Inc meet in Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, on the third Tuesday in February, April, June, August, October and December, at 1.30pm. There are always interesting guest speakers who present on various health and fitness topics related to osteoporosis. The next meeting is on 18 June.

This group offers support and information to assist people with osteoporosis and their families or carers. It has links with local and international osteoporosis organisations, from which it receives research updates.

For further information go to www.melbosg.org.au, email melbosg@gmail.com or phone Beryl on 9885 2839

NORTH MELBOURNE LIBRARY**Poetry Workshops**

26 June, 10 July and 24 July, 9.30am to 12.00 noon

Hotham Room, North Melbourne Library

Over three Wednesdays in June and July we are holding a series of workshops with Melbourne poet and librettist Patricia Sykes to explore the making of poetry. These workshops are free. Bookings can be made online at www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/MelbourneLibraryService/Pages/Whatson.aspx#Sykes or by dropping into the library. We promise good coffee and nice tea.

North Melbourne Book Group

Meets third Wednesday of the month, 6.45pm

19 June	<i>Foal</i> <i>Bread</i>	Gillian Mears
17 July	<i>Midnight</i> <i>Children</i>	Salman Rushdie
21 August	<i>Major Pettigrew</i> <i>Last Stand</i>	Helen Simonson
18 September	<i>The Casual Vacancy</i>	J.K. Rowling
16 October	<i>The Lost Dog</i>	Michelle de Kretser
20 November	<i>Behind the Beautiful Forevers</i>	Katherine Boo
18 December	<i>Monkey Grip</i>	Helen Garner

**All welcome — no bookings required
For enquiries, please phone 9658 9700**

What we have been reading

Fiona — *The Travel Writer* by Simone Lazaroo. Set in contemporary London and postwar Malaya. Absolutely beautiful writing.
The Abbotsford Mysteries by Patricia Sykes
Maverick: The Success Story Behind the World's Most Unusual Workplace by Ricardo Semler
Heather — *The Sense of an Ending* by Julian Barnes
Brooklyn by Colm Tóibín
Andrew — *Skagboys* by Irvine Welsh. About a 6/10.
Tom — *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness
Black Hole by Charles Burns

North Melbourne Library, 66 Errol Street, North Melbourne

**Ganagan (Deep Water):
Waterways in Koorie Life and Art**

**A Koorie Heritage Trust exhibition
6 June – 3 September 2013**

Ganagan is a Taungurung word meaning 'deep water'. Treasures on show from the Koorie Heritage Trust's collections include canoes, eel traps, fishing spears, paintings, photos and oral histories. *Ganagan* celebrates Koorie traditions and encourages visitors to see Victorian waters through Koorie eyes.

The exhibition incorporates creation stories that relate how Victorian waterways were formed and how Birrarung, the Yarra River, was filled with the tears of two frightened young boys.

Curator Floor Talk

Wednesday 10 July 10.00am – 11.00am

Hear the curators of *Ganagan* speak on the development of the exhibition and key works. The talk is free but numbers are limited to 30 people. Bookings are essential via the reception team on 8622 2600 or reception@korieheritagetrust.com.

Visit www.korieheritagetrust.com/exhibition for supporting activities, including Guided River Walks.

**Koorie Heritage Trust Cultural Centre
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COMMUNITY

Mo finds Aussie dream is less than it seems

Katrina Kincade-Sharkey

Resettlement trauma varies only in intensity, with suburban residents noting travel time, essential service delivery, local schools and property resale value when contemplating a move.

Try adding a new society, new lifestyle and, frequently, upgrade of education credentials after a successful career in, say, engineering or the law, medicine, vet science or marketing, finance, IT or any other 'developed' world speciality.

And then there's our patently damaging but oh-so-subconscious bias against skin colours not white, hair not straight and attire not Western. For an allegedly multicultural nation we often appear closed-off.

Inner-Melbourne crime statistics currently record some dozen daily physical and emotional abuses against people of different race and colour, and not just in areas with traditionally rough reputations. Over the past three months streets such as Swan, Fitzroy, Brunswick and Lygon, even King and Clarendon, have recorded assaults against predominantly young ethnic men and women.

And these people are scared: having fled physical, or religious, or political turmoil in their native lands, they followed the Aussie dream to a supposedly free society of great opportunity in Melbourne's north-west, yet for many that dream has turned sour.

Here lies a strong argument for measuring humanity in terms of social comfort, yet there's little for many new migrants of a different language, or lifestyle, or colour in Australia's allegedly pluralistic 'civilised' society.

Meet chartered accountant Mosopefoluwa — that's Mo — and his corporate lawyer wife, Abiodun Dalley, both 34-year-old Nigerian refugees. Their flight here was motivated by "that traditional desire of giving our kids a better future", Mo says, in perfect English. Parents to five- and three-year-olds, the couple will welcome their third babe this month.

One of the strongest assaults the Dalleys have experienced since arriving in March is our patent ignorance about their home nation's economic — and educational — level of development. Abiodun explains: "My mother was a regional bank manager among highly competitive professionals."

Mo continues: "Before we arrived we knew about Aussie swimming and tennis, but nothing else! We didn't know anyone here. No one!"

Mo travelled first. He still vividly remembers the trauma of his arrival at Tullamarine: "I'm standing outside at the taxi rank with two massive cases — you understand, I'm an international traveller just arrived in a new country

— but no one would take me to a hotel. None of those taxi drivers — and most were not Caucasian Australians — none of them would take me in their car."

After an extended 17-hour flight from Lagos, then customs and immigration procedures, Mo hoisted the massive baggage onto his fit but slender body and hiked to a meal at the airport McDonald's, then further to an airport hotel. He cringes at the memory.

"Perception and reality are two utterly different things," he argues, still gravely insulted by those local attitudes of inordinate prejudice.

Meet 29-year-old North Melbourne resident 'Liliana'. Evacuated in January, she desperately fears for relatives still in Mozambique's capital, Maputo, while telling her horrendous tale of refugee survival. Liliana's petrochemical engineer husband had dared to query their nation's 'democratic' dispersal of its assets to favoured citizens.

Her glorious black eyes cloud over, she screws her hands and her voice breaks: "In November last year soldiers took our beautiful baby girl, 'Po Po' — she's seven now — when she was arriving home from school. There were three of them — devils, they were — and they took turns raping our angel.

"The dogs, they destroyed her child's body, tore away all her insides. They broke her soul, and mine. I was seven months pregnant then, but I raced outside when I heard her screaming. They hit me, but would not take my body — they wanted to attack Daletto, my husband, and they did dirty, devil things with both our

daughter and me in causing miscarriage of our baby boy," Liliana mourns.

"My darling Daletto is probably no more; he could not handle what had happened to us and said he would not rest till he had exacted revenge." She cries quietly, so as not to wake her daughter. After top medical treatment on arrival, mother and child are still awaiting formal psychological assessment; the child is fearful of trips to school.

Then there's Ugandan professor 'Harry', now living in West Melbourne. He lost access to his elderly parents, his partner and their 17-year-old son after refusing to support government moves to promote Uganda's 'educational progress', escaping from 14 months detention in Kampala last October.

"Foreign embassies have to be credited with saving many dozen freedom fighters' lives," praises Harry, before detailing his schooling campaign. Secondary and tertiary education enrolment rates in Africa are significantly lower than in any other part of the world, with far higher gender inequality for basic education.

"And we're still a desperately poor continent: 72 per cent of Sub-Saharan youth live on less than US\$2 per day, while unemployment in Uganda is horrendous for young people. More than four-fifths of our youth have never worked, never been shown how, never been encouraged, so you'll understand why I'm finding it difficult to hear tales of young Australians who don't want to work because they find it boring.

"They should travel in the real world for a

while," Harry explodes.

Yet there are still genuine hassles here. Arriving as skilled migrants, the Dalleys were immediately granted permanent residence. "But after more than 1000 applications, neither of us were able to get work," says Abiodun.

Mo's gravelly voice interrupts: "I was told to start something manual. I'd always been proud of the quality of my work, so that was genuine trauma. Anyway, I did a personal care course to care for rehab and elderly patients, but couldn't even get a job in that! And they said I'd done well in the course."

The couple say VincentCare has provided them great help, as its refugee crisis centre in Wheatsheaf Road, Glenroy, is a regular comfort stop for a quiet coffee and proverbial warm shoulder with several dozen newly-arrived African families.

The centre's social workers and employment advocates checked Mo's CV to discover he'd consulted for five years with a multinational accountancy firm, so VincentCare sent his CV off to that corporation's Melbourne franchise. If they employ him, he'll only have to check through five units of a TAFE access qualification, rather than completely revise his tertiary education at university, post-university and in cadetship-level employment.

VincentCare's agenda means the Dalley family's future looks hopeful.

Katrina Kincade-Sharkey writes regularly for the News



Nigerian refugees 'Mo' and Abiodun Dalley are happy to be in Australia

Photo: Jim Weatherill



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Railway Placer rails against Regional Rail

Steve Jasper’s article on the Regional Rail Link project (*News*, March) was an excellent summary of the situation. However, it contains an important error where he states that 150 diesel trains will soon be using the Railway Place tracks and flyover.

An easy mistake to make as RRLA quote 150 services on their website, but read the small print (highly recommended with this project) and you will see that to this figure must be added an additional 25 per cent to cover non-scheduled diesel train movements along the same line for such things as refuelling.

By way of confirmation the RRLA’s construction director Evan Tattersall regularly quotes a figure of 190 trains a day, proof that the number of diesel trains running just 10 metres from residents’ homes on Railway Place will be increasing from one hourly to one every six minutes when RRL commences in 2016.

The diesel particulate output, reclassified by the W.H.O. in 2012 as carcinogenic to humans, from this increase is a huge concern to West Melbourne families. However, these concerns are simply ignored by RRLA, government and Council alike who hide behind weak standards, computer modelling (not actual air testing) and ‘major project’ exemptions.

John Marriot (*Railway Place, West Melbourne*)

Natasha planted gardening tips in the *News*
I’ve been writing a gardening column for the *News* for the last two years. Unfortunately,

the column published in this edition will be my last. The demands of work have caught up with me!

It has been a great joy writing for the paper. It has improved immensely over my time as a contributor. Thanks to Maurice, my friendly editor, who has steered it in the right direction.

Natasha Grogan (*Kew*)

Editor: Natasha once cheekily headed an email to me with “You Crazy Old Thing”. Such disrespect! Well, you Crazy Young Thing, thanks for your beautifully written contributions over the last two years. We’ll miss you.

Bianca to miss keeping up with local news
I finished up at the Arts House in March and wanted to say a big ‘thank you’ for including some of our Arts House activities in the *North and West Melbourne News*. During my time working in North Melbourne I really loved picking up a copy and seeing what was happening in the neighbourhood.

Bianca Charleston (*Clifton Hill*)

Got something to say?

Send us a Letter to the Editor.
Keep it short (50-150 words). Keep it light, bright and interesting. Keep it local.

Write about anything you would like to share with our readers.

Send letters to mauriceg@bigpond.com

Views from the News

Maurice Gaul

The *North and West Melbourne News* is a proud community newspaper and we value all feedback.

A reader recently emailed concerns with our March edition. She expressed “amazement” at the page-one profiles of incoming principals at our two local Catholic secondary schools and said the edition looked like a “newsletter from the Catholic Education Office”.

She also took issue with “spruiking” in our education pages by “students at those particular schools”, and expressed dismay that the paper had been “hijacked”, our normally commendable “balance” had been lost and the paper had been “misused”.

Our reader politely declined the offer to publish her concerns in full. However, having fairly represented the criticisms made, the *News* would like to present a rather different view.

In my 24 months in the editor’s chair, I’ve seen the paper’s aim as reporting on, reflecting and celebrating local people, groups and events. Simply, as revealing our wonderful community to itself.

Les Murray, Australia’s greatest living poet, articulated this sentiment when he wrote: *The common dish, around which we break bread and commune and know who we are in the neighbourhood, the valley, the region we live in.*

Both the arrival of new principals in two of our five local schools and the departure of three long-serving local clergymen were significant community events.

Thus, these arrivals and departures received appropriate coverage, in line with our aim of — in each edition — capturing, talking up and promoting our community’s identities, events

and organisations.

The later “spruiking...by students at those... schools” was in fact appropriate reporting by local schools’ staff. Each edition, all five local schools receive the same open invitation (or plea!) to report on school life. They do so as they choose (regularly, frequently, occasionally, rarely or never) and the *News* is delighted to publish their contributions.

An identical invitation to contribute on their work is extended each edition to every North and West Melbourne community group I can find. (They all know this because I harass them endlessly each edition!)

These groups include arts, cultural, choral, activist, environmental, sporting, homelessness, social justice, advocacy, service, migrant support, legal support, conservation, homework support, health, political, local history, childcare, housing support and animal facilities. And, yes — schools and churches too!

Most of our reader’s concerns were fair comment — but “hijacked”? That’s an extraordinary claim. By whom, how and why? No one has “hijacked” the *News*. Nor has The Centre, our owner and publisher, ever infringed the editorial independence of this proudly all-volunteer community newspaper.

The decision to publish the stories that so concerned our reader was justified. As noted, the inclusion of content reporting on, reflecting and celebrating our local community is what this paper is about.

Given that, we will run anything, unless it’s defamatory, malicious, damaging, infringes copyright or is in contempt.

Just send it in! The *News* is inclusive, eclectic and catholic. (That’s small ‘c’!)

Maurice Gaul is editor of the *News*

Community Comment: Suzie Luddon asks people in the street about the worst job they’ve ever had



Riley (21), student, North Melbourne

My worst job would have to be working as a dish pig at a pub. The hours and washing dishes were the worst things about it.



Emma (28), banker, North Melbourne

Working at the Australian Open at a corporate marquee. It was very, very hot, no air con, very long hours, and I didn’t see any tennis.



Aaron (27), lawyer, Kensington

At high school, I worked on the check-out at Coles. I’ve done cleaning on building sites, but that was worse — tedious and repetitive.



Dianne (45), marketing, North Melbourne

My worst job was working in a bowling alley and being in charge of the shoes. I had to clean and disinfect them and it was revolting.

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Our gyms work out a better way to work out

Michael Roche

The words 'performance enhancement' have been ingrained into the minds of weary sport fans this year.

In the AFL, peptide has entered the lexicon, with the taunt "Show us your peptides!" now heard in stadiums and directed at any team suspected of playing loosely with questionable supplements.

Is taking a short cut to improvement only confined to sports professionals? Hardly. We all look for faster and more efficient ways to achieve results, especially when it comes to physical fitness or losing weight. But a survey of some local fitness trainers and coaches shows another way.

Chris Gregoriou is owner and manager of MetroBody Fitness, an intimate studio on Mary Street, that provides a private space for people to work out. "With no mirrors," he says. MetroBody Fitness will be celebrating its second anniversary this month.

Chris says many people don't enjoy exercise and turn to supplements for a quick fix. He recently overheard a discussion in a health food store, where a customer asked the store attendant: "I need to lose weight. What can I take?" After the customer left, the attendant confided in Chris: "We get asked that question all the time."

"People feel good when they spend money on supplements," Chris says, but he argues it is largely a placebo affect.

"I believe supplements are a waste of money. We got in some protein supplements because people were asking about them, but the best protein is through food."

According to Chris, the resort to supplements tells us something about society. "It is a changing society we're living in, people are looking for quick solutions and it's growing. The supplement industry is not slowing down."

This observation is echoed by Steve Stenborg, owner of North Melbourne Boxing and Fitness, located in a massive multi-business warehouse on Sutton Street in the industrial zone of North Melbourne. Steve has over 20 years experience in martial arts and the fitness industry. He is also a trainer for the North Melbourne Football Club.

"There are new supplement companies popping up and I don't see too many disappearing," he says. But from a business point of view, Steve does not want to go anywhere near them. "We don't do them. We don't sell them. We're not interested in selling proteins," he says.

"I'm not saying don't do proteins after you work out, but the right food, right training and

the right mindset, you can't beat that. You get a better sense of accomplishment doing something through your own effort."

Crossfit U is the new kid on the block. Coach Alex Cheong with cousin Ben Reynolds opened the gym (or box as Alex calls it) in January. It's located in a garage-like space on Rosslyn Street.

do it by yourself," he says. The focus is on movements you do in real life. "If you've ever gotten up off a toilet seat, you've just done a squat," explains Alex.

"If you've placed something on a shelf, you've just done a press up. If you've picked something off the ground, you've done a dead lift." As the focus is on natural move-

healthy weight. Chris has many people coming into his gym who say: "I'm so stressed. I need to do something about my stress." Chris explains chronic stress increases cortisol levels in the blood stream, leading to increased body fat.

A sense of community is also occurring down at Sutton Street. Steve says North



Crossfit co-owner Ben Reynolds supervises client Dani as she works out

Photo: Jim Weatherill

Alex has a different take on performance enhancement. "Everyone trains here for performance, but the goals are different, more simple life goals, like looking good naked," he laughs. He would recommend some supplements, such as proteins, fish oils and branched chain amino acids, but he does not promote them at his gym.

Instead, Alex promotes a sense of community and friendly competition as a means to enhance performance. People at Crossfit U work out together, get to know each other and can compare individual scores and progress on the gym's white board or website.

Crossfit's teaching methodology is about 'constant change'. The idea is that if you do the same exercise for more than six weeks, your body does not make any substantial gain. "The body accommodates," says Alex. Sadly, this means for those endlessly running around Princes Park, you have to rethink your routine all over again.

"It's a school of fitness, teaching people how to learn movements, then eventually you

ment, Crossfit shuns the rows of ubiquitous machines seen at most mainstream gyms.

Over at MetroBody Fitness, no machines can be found either. "The body moves in infinite ways, so why sit down doing singular movements and monotone exercises?" asks Chris, holding onto a strap while leaning backwards to squat and do an arm movement at the same time, all accomplished in one seamless motion.

A sense of community is also nurtured at MetroBody Fitness. Chris says the success of personal training is not just about exercise. "It's about providing support, motivation and understanding. We get to know our clients well and become like a little family."

For instance, Chris had a client who had never run in her life. Her goal was to run one kilometre in a reasonable time. When eventually she achieved that goal, Chris said to her: "Let's go out and celebrate that." So they went out and shared a celebratory meal.

Management of stress is also a key factor in improving physical fitness and maintaining a

Melbourne Boxing and Fitness is different. "It's a place for people to interact and network. It's not about you coming in for an hour and that's it. You will learn something and get a work out."

Despite the gym's emphasis on boxing and fighting, women make up 50 per cent of its membership. "We only train fighters during the day though," he says, "so there isn't too much bravado at night putting off women who attend the gym."

Steve makes a point of introducing members to each other. It has engendered a community spirit that has seen gym members get involved in raising money for charities such as the RUN 4 KIDS Foundation.

So it seems a good gym, with the development of friendship between members, combined with a supportive and motivational trainer, can offer a lot more than a bottle of supplements.

Michael Roche writes regularly for the News

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North and West Melbourne Association

The Association's annual general meeting took place on Tuesday 21 May (after deadline). Below are some extracts from the annual report for the year 2012, featuring areas of involvement that receive less coverage than the pressing issues surrounding planning.

Submission to City of Melbourne's draft Heritage Strategy

On 14 November, a number of Association members, together with members of the Hotham History Project, attended a workshop to consult on the City of Melbourne's draft Heritage Strategy. Attendees welcomed the opportunity to range freely over many issues that the strategy addressed without feeling constrained to fit into a predetermined agenda. We were also impressed with the extent of issues covered by the strategy.

The Association has some strongly-held concerns about the place of heritage, particularly the way it has been treated in the planning scheme. Our submission to the council tabled in early December focused on these concerns, citing many examples of issues we felt had not been given a fair hearing by the council.

Homelessness Action Group

The Homelessness Action Group (HAG) is a North and West Melbourne-based group of diverse participants composed of service providers and residents, who include members of the NWMA.

The aim of the HAG is to present a human face to homelessness and increase community acceptance and awareness of its complexities.

2012 was a busy year, with a new project worker, Nicky McColl Jones, who has conscientiously overseen the development and fruition of many of the group's aims to raise awareness about homelessness and housing affordability in North and West Melbourne. Achievements included:

- A successful Community Forum on homelessness and its implications, held at the North Melbourne Town Hall Arts House, with the keynote speaker, local MP Adam Bandt, expressing his belief that housing affordability is a human right and that public housing is critical in reducing homelessness
- Articles in the *North and West Melbourne News* that presented real stories about home-

less and marginalised people

- HAG brochures rewritten and distributed to increase the group's profile in the local community
- Continued exposure in the media of sub-standard rental accommodation by HAG member Allan Martin
- Spring Fling — a HAG stall that was well visited, with 75 surveys completed on the day suggesting a generally positive outlook towards those less fortunate.

It has been suggested that women form 40 per cent of the total homeless population in the City of Melbourne but this number is disputed. Female homelessness can be 'hidden', as women, especially those with children, tend to avoid negotiating a complex system that does not adjust well to their special needs. In addition, women often feel intimidated by men who frequent the services.

A pilot program at the East Melbourne Library providing breakfast and addressing the needs of homeless women and their children will be set up in 2013.

Carlton Police Community Consultative Committee (PCCC)

Around 20 local organisations are represented on the committee, including the Association, and approximately 15 to 20 individuals attend each bimonthly meeting (some organisations have more than one representative). The PCCC encompasses Carlton, Parkville, North Melbourne and Kensington.

Most meetings include a speaker. Melbourne City Council have used it to explain the role of their new Neighbourhood Development Officers. Police provide a report on local issues, and input is sought from committee members, who often contribute constructive ideas towards the resolution of a problem.

Members use the PCCC to seek support for their work and share ideas, sometimes creating cooperation across organisations on particular projects. For instance, there is a breathalyser project run by Carlton Rotary Club that uses TAC funds to install breathalyser machines in hotels, and input about possible locations is provided by the group.

Docklands Security Group

The Flagstaff Police Community Consultative Committee has been replaced by the

Docklands Security Group. Meetings are chaired by Victoria Police. Most members are representatives of corporations based in Docklands, including Myer and ANZ. Southern Cross railway station, Waterfront City shopping centre and two residential towers are also represented.

Three meetings were held during the financial year. The agenda includes crime analysis statistics, upcoming police operations and other business.

Social events

Over the past few years the NWMA has held regular social events.

These have usually taken the form of a Seasonal Celebratory Dinner at various North and West Melbourne venues, some being the Rubicon, Royal Mail Hotel, Kathmandu Cottage, Maria's Trattoria, La Do and

time noise and bright lights.

There is much concern about dangers from the clouds of dust raised, for both residents and railway workers. Water trucks, when present, are often not positioned in front of the construction machinery where they would be effective in damping down the dust.

This is particularly worrying given the finding of three small pieces of material believed to be asbestos beside the tracks next to Railway Place over Easter. The CMR (City to Maribyrnong River) team claimed to know nothing about this until alerted by local residents, although the worker removing it wore a CMR vest.

Asbestos has also been found in a disused tunnel under the railway. At a meeting with residents on 1 May, RRL personnel explained in detail the meticulous process to remove or seal this extremely hazardous material.



Regional Rail workers construct emergency footpaths and install handrails on the flyover

Photo: Janet Graham

Libertine restaurants.

During 2012 we held three events: a summer (Christmas) dinner, a winter solstice dinner and a spring dinner. Between 25 and 35 members, their partners and friends attended each event.

The dinners have proved popular and have given Association members the added opportunity to socialise outside of the formal meeting times. We look forward to seeing new faces at future events.

Submissions made by the Association during the year are available on the NWMA website, www.nwma.org.au

Regional Rail Link (RRL) update

Work recently began on installation of emergency footpaths, handrails and cladding along the rail flyover. A number of Railway Place residents took up the RRL's offer of relocation to a motel to avoid disturbance from the night-

The presence of friable asbestos in discarded wooden sleepers, as discovered during upgrade of the Glen Waverley line, is even more concerning. The Firewood Association investigated reports of respiratory problems affecting people after they burned the sleepers.

The puzzle remains as to why diesel emissions, now listed in the same class of carcinogens as asbestos, are not being taken as seriously. The Passenger Rail Infrastructure Noise Policy has finally been released, and will no doubt provide a distraction to the more critical health issues surrounding this project.

NWMA meetings

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 via Union Street).

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.

Membership renewals and new memberships are welcomed!

Subscriptions remain at \$20 (\$10 concession) per family

Payment methods

In person at any Commonwealth Bank or via direct credit
BSB: 063 158 — Account No: 00800140
Account name: North & West Melbourne Association Inc.
Commonwealth Bank of Australia, 51 Errol Street, North Melbourne
Reference field: Full name of member

Please email or post payment details (including date credited and amount paid) to info@nwma.org.au or

The Treasurer
North & West Melbourne Association Inc.
PO Box 102, North Melbourne, Vic 3051

Supported by the City of Melbourne Community Services Grants Program



Volunteers build a bridge with Kraft and skill in their Westgate Park conservation project

Izumi Ishikawa

For the passionate volunteers at Conservation Volunteers Australia, planting native trees and collecting rubbish along a local river are not the only ways they contribute to protecting our green environment.

Over four days in March and April, groups of volunteers from Conservation Volunteers Australia helped at Westgate Park to assemble and install a much-needed footbridge, table setting and bench seats that were made from recycled plastic waste.

These conservation projects were part of the partnership between Conservation Volunteers Australia and Kraft Foods that has been supporting the community organisation to deliver meaningful conservation outcomes in Australia and New Zealand's unique environments for the past three years.

To protect the saltmarsh habitat and one of Victoria's rare saltmarsh plants at Westgate Park, Kraft Foods has donated the recycled outdoor equipment made and supplied by Replas, manufacturing experts in converting waste plastics to high-quality products such as sturdy outdoor furniture.

At the official unveiling of the new equipment at Westgate Park, Kraft Foods corporate affairs manager Julia Fraser announced that the donation is a show of Kraft Foods' com-

mitment to creating a viable and sustainable recycling solution for its packaging.

"We hope that the donation to Westgate Park will be enjoyed by the local community and help to educate Australians about how they can play a part in the recycling of everyday products," she said.

The donation marks the first collaborative venture between Kraft, the RED Group and Coles since joining the REDcycle program, an innovative recycling scheme that offers Australians an environmentally sustainable alternative to disposing of their soft plastic food packaging such as confectionery wrappers, bread and cereal bags in landfill.

Soft plastic waste is collected from drop-off points at selected Coles stores and is then sent to local manufacturer Replas where it is converted into quality recycled-plastic outdoor furniture and other products for Australian communities.

John, a full-time student from North Melbourne, said: "It was such a cool experience to be able to help install a picnic table at a local park, and it's even better when they are made from recycled materials! I felt great at the end of the day; it is amazing to be part of a team where people from different backgrounds come together for a day and achieve something that can benefit the entire community."

With free transport provided from 162 Adderley Street, West Melbourne, the Melbourne office of Conservation Volunteers

Australia offers a variety of volunteer opportunities to explore local parks and reserves while helping to improve the natural environment.

If you would like to find out more or get involved, then contact the Melbourne office of Conservation Volunteers Australia. Phone us at 9326 8250 or email us at melbourne@cva.org.au.

Or you can pop into our Adderley Street office for a chat with our staff and collect some pamphlets.

Izumi Ishikawa is regional coordinator of Conservation Volunteers Australia



Seven happy volunteers proud of their work at Westgate Park Photo: Andrew Mathers

HAG forum shines a light on homelessness

Nicky McColl Jones

The North and West Melbourne Homelessness Action Group (HAG) hosted its second community forum at the North Melbourne Town Hall last month.

The HAG forums are an opportunity for all members of the community to come together to discuss homelessness and potential solutions. The theme of the forum was health and homelessness in the local community.

Health issues are shaping up to be a hot policy area in the upcoming federal election. Health and access to health care are of concern for everyone, but especially so for those in the community who are the most disadvantaged.

Accessing ongoing health services can be challenging for homeless and disadvantaged

people, yet they often have the most complex health care needs.

Over 100 people attended the May forum and were greeted in the foyer of the town hall by HAG volunteers from Monash University to register and receive a HAG goodie bag filled with interesting information about homelessness and health services in North Melbourne and a copy of the Council to Homeless Persons' *Parity* magazine covering the topic of health and homelessness.

Attendees used the time before the start of the forum to network and grab a coffee.

The former Victorian Health Services Commissioner, Beth Wilson, was a fabulous master of ceremonies and set the scene for the morning, warning the speakers in good humour: "If you go over time, the harmonica will be played."

Forum speakers included Adam Bandt MP, who focused on dental health for the disadvantaged; Jennifer Kanis MP, who spoke about the Central City Community Health Service at the Drill Hall; Spike Chippalone from The Council to Homeless Persons peer education support program, who spoke with candour about his personal experience of homelessness and the health issues he endured as a result; and Dr Guy Johnson from RMIT, who presented research on the health issues of rough sleepers from Journey to Social Inclusion, a pilot program aimed at breaking the cycle of long-term homelessness.

Other speakers were Theresa Swanborough from RDNS homeless persons program, who spoke about how homelessness is bad for your health, and John Blewonski, CEO of VincentCare Victoria, who finished on a positive note, focusing on the innovative services that exist in North Melbourne for homeless


people, including Ozanam House and Ozanam Community Centre.

Beth Wilson took questions from the audience for 20 minutes. They covered a range of topics from the safety of rooming houses and access to dental care for disadvantaged people who may not be homeless through to housing and health care for those just out of prison.

Beth summed up the event succinctly and welcomed everyone to enjoy the light refreshments provided by the HAG. If you have any concerns around health and homelessness, please contact Nicky McColl Jones at nickymccoll@vincentcare.org.au.

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

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Jennifer Kanis, Spike Chippalone and John Blewonski at the forum Photo: Michelle Richter

Are our PSOs here to help us or scalp us?

KF Loke

It's Saturday night, the footy is over and the Magpies have won. A father is bringing his three little boys home from the game, their black-and-white apparel clearly marking their team allegiance. They fluked a lift to North Melbourne station with friends, and now they're heading to the platform to wait for their Upfield train.

Having not quite shrugged off the excitement of the night, the eldest brother does what older brothers do — he challenges his younger, more vertically-limited siblings to a height test.

He jumps and easily reaches the information signboard directing passengers to their desired trains and gives it a sharp tap. With some effort, so does the middle child. The youngest of the brothers, only about twelve, finds it a bit more daunting.

"Just a little more," says the youngest and also the shortest, the drawstrings on his red hoodie whipping wildly around as he repeatedly attempts the leap. "Just a little more and I'll reach the board too!"

He does, and gives it a tap.

From the other end of the platform, two protective service officers (PSOs) on patrol stride towards the group. One of them stands to the side while her colleague voices his disapproval of station board tapping to the trio of brothers.

"I saw someone in a red hoodie jumping to touch the signboard just now, from up there," says the officer, gesturing to the station's elevated area overlooking the platforms. The brothers playfully feign ignorance of their act. "Don't do that again; it's for your own safety."

The train pulls up, and the family boards. While the children laugh and discuss their close encounter with the law, the father reflects on the moment.

"I think it is because they are young and they are more vulnerable to being picked on," he says.

His youngest son adjusts his Collingwood cap and cheekily adds with some bravado: "When they said they saw someone with a red hoodie touching the board, I could have said, 'It might have been me.'"

Seemingly unfazed by the incident, the youngest shows his siblings just how he finally touched the board — by lifting one hand up into the air then slamming down hard.

Enforcing discipline on such acts of misbehaviour is part and parcel of duty for PSOs stationed at North Melbourne and other inner-city stations. While minor mischief is usually let off with a discretionary warning, more serious offences are dealt with and formally charged.



North Melbourne station is patrolled by PSOs aiming to curb anti-social behaviour

Photo: Jim Weatherill

Most of these are liquor and smoking related.

Inspector Charles Allen of Victoria Police's transit safety division defended this practice of policing seemingly trivial offences in the *Herald Sun*.

"Low-level public order crimes often lead to higher order offending," he said, claiming lower-order behavioural issues to be precursors to more serious offences. "The PSOs' role is to create expectations of behaviour in and around the transit system, and that's exactly what they are doing."

Several less-positive reports, however, have shown the PSOs to act in a much more pro-active role in enforcing conduct and collecting information such as names, destinations and dates of birth, regardless of whether an offence has been committed.

While Victoria Police has defended this approach as standard practice to gain information about the area, there has been some indication that certain demographic groups have had more interaction with officers seeking 'friendly chats', as the PSOs term it.

18-year-old 'Ellen' is no Australian, neither Aussie born nor bred. With her distinctive clothes, pulled-back hair-do and timid air, the Chinese student sticks out from the local crowd of commuters at North Melbourne.

"I just got off the train and I was checking the train routes when he approached me," she says in Mandarin, describing how a PSO came up and demanded an identification check.

She recounts how the PSO took down her details in his notebook while at the same time reassuring her that she was not in trouble.

"He said it was just a record of people at the

station. They said they were supposed to go around talking to people at the station," she says.

"It was not malicious, it was not harmful. The ID check just makes you stand on your toes."

Another commuter at North Melbourne station, 'Arjuna', a Sri Lankan in his early 20s, shared a similar experience.

"They asked me where I was from, what I was doing in Melbourne and where I was heading to," he says.

He mentions that the PSOs, after an ID check, chatted with him about his family back in his home country. Although he says he felt uncomfortable, he concedes the PSOs were "not threatening".

President of civil liberties group Liberty Victoria, Jane Dixon, takes issue with this practice, despite what officers at the station defend as "getting to know people".

"People don't always realise that they're not always obliged to give personal information," she explains, then adds that PSOs can be intimidating to people just by the fact that they are in uniform.

"Most people wouldn't want to be targeted by somebody in uniform unnecessarily, even if it's for community engagement," she says.

"When people in uniform come up to you and start asking questions, most people feel obliged to answer because they're worried that they'll be in trouble. But why should ordinary people be subjected to that sort of experience of feeling intimidated, as if they're in trouble, for no reason?"

While Dixon agrees that the PSOs' presence

leaves some people feeling safe and protected, she takes issue with any targeted, pro-active profiling that may be taking place on young people or minority groups from non-English speaking backgrounds.

"We suggest that profiling is not an appropriate role for PSOs. It should be a reactive role, rather than one that involves any form of profiling of community members."

Despite these concerns, public support for PSO conduct at stations such as North Melbourne remains high.

Karley Reilly of North Melbourne's Dousta Galla Community Health Service offers a possible explanation.

"I believe as a society we are very quick to pass blame and target a particular group. Unfortunately, it is quite common that the particular groups being targeted are often misrepresented and can act out, therefore cementing their reputation as trouble-makers," she says.

"PSOs need to be mindful that they are profiling a 'common mindset' and not instil blame until proven otherwise."

Reilly feels that society should focus more on "providing engagement and education of 'identified problem groups' as a reactive approach toward crime", but she agrees that the presence of PSOs conveys a needed sense of safety at stations.

"I think both are necessary reactions at this time, and hopefully, after engagement and education, we will no longer need the presence of PSOs."

KF Loke writes regularly for the News

All atwitter online as we fumble and tumble

Suzie Luddon

You would need to be living in a cave behind the great firewall of China to be ignorant of the rise of Facebook and Twitter in the world.

They're so much a part of our reality now that it's hard to believe that a short five years ago Facebook was in its infancy and Twitter was just starting to reach its tipping point. Since then, the pace of social media has been unrelenting, and for the late adopters, technophobes and sceptics among us, it can all be a bit confusing.

Do we now live in a world in which smartphones are as necessary as air? Do we have to get on board the social media bandwagon or perish, or can we ignore it all and carry on as we've always done? What's Digg, and does it matter if we don't know?

Well, knowing about Digg and other social media platforms is not vital to a quality life,

but just in case we're missing something special, let's take a look at what some of these things actually do.

You might have noticed the Digg icon on some websites. This allows you to rate the site you're viewing, and then other members can 'dig' the page or 'bury' it. Digg's by-line is 'What the Internet is talking about right now.'

It's similar to Reddit, which calls itself 'The front page of the Internet' and which also runs on a voting system. The main point of difference is that Reddit members can submit their own posts (not necessarily websites) and can interact with each other. Great sites if you want to be on the pulse of what's trending, or to try and set a trend yourself.

Foursquare is a location-based social network that requires a smartphone. You download the app and 'check in' when you visit a venue, and you can get points and discounts from some businesses. I don't see the point in checking in everywhere I go, but I'm happy to

be disabused of that perception.

To me, it conjures up a very 21st century image of friends hanging out together but ignoring each other while they focus on their phones. The connection they're having isn't with the people who are sitting next to them, which is bizarre when you think about it.

Tumblr is a blogging site that lets you follow other users and be followed back. It allows users to post video, audio, text, photos and even other people's blog posts into their blog, and share it with other people. It's a one-stop-shop for bloggers.

Judging by its staggering upload and viewing figures, most people are familiar with YouTube, the video-sharing site that is owned by Google. It's the go-to place for everything you ever wanted to know about anything, and is great for visual learners.

I use it for everything from learning how to use the magic wand in Photoshop (if only someone would invent a real one!) to practis-

ing some Michael Jackson moves to getting my daily dose of comedy. YouTube can help you learn things and make you laugh, and that's good enough for me.

There are too many sites to mention, and there are millions of people in the world for whom social media is front and centre of their lives. But there are also plenty of people in the world who live without an Internet connection or phone, so none of it is necessary. For someone who prefers to live irl (in real life, for the initialism-challenged), it's easy to ignore it all and just get on with getting out.

I think the key is to be discerning and not get to the point where you're spending more time in front of a screen than in front of a real person. I reckon I could even live without YouTube if the unlikely day ever comes when Google goes bust!

Suzie Luddon writes regularly for the News

As the kids start shooting arrows, it's time for their cautious mum to make a sharp point

Mum's day, every day

Margaret Langdon

Ka-chunk! Max shoots a bamboo dart into a home-made target — a cardboard box with a texta-drawn bulls-eye. “Good shot! 50 points,” says Lauren, up for her turn.

The ingenious DIY archery kit is made of Connector pen lids and rubber bands and is used to fire bamboo skewers. You can imagine my delight when Max came home from a mate's place full of enthusiasm for making his own version and teaching his little sister how to use it.

For the next few days my lounge room became a home of indoor archery. I cannot say I was entirely comfortable with skewers flying through the air; in fact, I think I flinched with every ka-chunk. I know it's much the same as playing darts, but then darts have always made me nervous, too. I considered completely banning the game but didn't, for a couple of reasons.

Firstly, I had to concede it was fun aiming and firing the skewers (but kiddies, don't try this at home without adult supervision). Secondly, I could see the kids were enjoying flirting with danger. Don't we all, at least a little bit? So we set some strict rules that had to be followed without fail, then the kids set about their home-grown archery competition very seriously, keeping running totals of scores.

Lots of kids, particularly boys, enjoy risky pursuits. Most men can tell you boyhood stories involving billy-carts, trampolines, trees, ropes and weapons of many descriptions. The foolhardy nature of the stunts seems to increase in direct proportion to the number of boys in the family.

I was listening to a discussion on the radio about this topic the other day. People were phoning in their stories of dangerous childhood games. One man said that he and his brothers used to soak cotton balls in metho, set fire to them and throw them at each other. Eeek! Maybe bamboo skewers aren't so bad after all.

My friend John confessed that when he was a kid, he once hit a bullet with a hammer. Fortunately the bullet wasn't pointed at any of his siblings at the time.

“Err, what happens when you hit a bullet with a hammer?” I asked.

“It makes an almighty bang and then you get whacked by your father,” he replied. He went on to tell me about the time his brother dared him to jump off the garage roof. “It was a loooooong way down,” he said.

Another friend, Adam, served several years in the army. I once asked if the scar on his chin was from those military days. “No,” he said. “That's from when I was a kid. My brother and I used to have competitions to see who could swing the highest in the hammock. We were always falling out and landing on our heads.”

“So, if you kept hurting yourselves, why did you still do it?” I asked.

“Dunno, really. It was pretty good fun. We just kept daring each other to go higher,” he replied.

It's stories like these that make me glad Max doesn't have a brother.

While it's tempting to ban everything our kids want to do that could possibly cause them harm, I wonder if it makes more sense to teach them to play with danger safely, if that's not too much of a contradiction.

It's satisfying to take a risk and survive it, and it's something that we are drawn to do in varying degrees throughout our lives. I think the knack lies in making it a calculated risk by being able to weigh up the dangers and decide how to handle them, or to elect to not handle them at all, if the risk is too great.

So, on this occasion I allowed my children to take the calculated risk of DIY archery, but only after we had decided upon the rules that would make it safe (I hoped) and discussed the serious consequences of any errors.

I hoped it would safely satisfy, at least for a while, that innate need to court danger that seems to lurk in every child. And besides, it was pretty good fun. Guess who was the only

one to get the 500-point bullseye? (Ha! Mum rocks!)

The lethal bamboo-skewer phase lasted only a few days, until unfortunately we ran out of the right-sized rubber bands. “Oh, what a shame!” I cried, when we had to pack away the weapons.

“Anyone for a game of extreme Scrabble?”

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



Drawing: Ava Macmaster

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NORTH BY NORTH WEST

Steve Jasper

There's such a thing as a Zone-1 sensibility. Apparently I have it. Do you?

Allow me to explain. For those of you unaware, Zone 1 is the area mapped out on our public transport maps in yellow. Zone 2 is in blue, and the now-defunct Zone 3 was in red. Zone 1 is extensive, stretching out to Sunshine, Glenroy, and anywhere a tram will take you, including Vermont South. Yes,

Vermont South is in Zone 1, believe it or not.

North and West Melbourne are indisputably in Zone 1; in fact, if there were such a thing as a Zone 0.1, I would hazard that we would be in that too. North and West Melbourne are so Zone 1 it hurts.

How do you know if you have Zone-1 sensibilities? Well, I've designed a quick quiz for you, just like you get in the trashy magazines. So, grab a cup of tea or any preferred drink (unless it's wheatgrass juice, in which case you should consult a mental health professional), sit down comfortably and do the quick five question quiz!

Q1: How do you take your coffee (or chocolate, or green tea)? (a) instant / teabags; (b) freshly-brewed beans / leaves in a pot; (c) from beans / leaves harvested when the moon is full and the sun is in Virgo, by organic fair trade companies; or (d) you drink rooibos.

Q2: Scan your wardrobe. It looks most like: (a) splashes of colour of most, if not every,

colour of the rainbow; (b) minimally tailored clothes in earthy neutral colours; (c) funky vintage and retro pieces; or (d) so much black, that to quote the late Johnny Cash, "when I open my wardrobe it's sooo dark inside!"

Q3: A new reality TV show debuts on free-to-air television, featuring rednecks singing opera, losing weight and diving into a swimming pool. Your reaction is: (a) OMG, I must program the remote to watch this; (b) it can stay on in the background while I do my ironing; or (c) I'd rather slam my head into a brick wall than watch this dreck.

Q4: You think bicycles are: (a) a traffic hazard and should be kept off the streets; (b) fun enough to ride, but not a serious means of transport; (c) something you love the idea of, but think Melbourne's too dangerous to ride a bike in; or (d) such a brilliant way of getting around, you even have your own drink bottle and rack for shopping.

Q5: You need to buy some groceries so you

go to: (a) a leading chain supermarket that plays "Henry Mancini's 101 Plastic String Orchestra"; (b) the corner shop because it's handy; (c) from the organic section of the Queen Vic, where you know the sellers on a first-name basis; or (d) you get your organic produce delivered in a co-op.

Scoring: (a) 0 points, (b) 5 points, (c) 10 points, (d) 15 points.

Now check your total points score:

0-25: Oh, dear. Did you take a wrong turn?

25-40: Almost there. You're the one in the bright funky vintage clothes on the tram, but haven't quite crossed the line to riding a bike just yet.

40+: You know who you are. I've seen you, clad in black on your mountain bike, vegetables piled on the back of the bike, parked outside a local café drinking Ethiopian single blend. Welcome to Zone 1!

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

Rotary wheely wants recruits on our roster

Conrad Cunningham

Are you a veteran volunteer or perhaps someone who is new to community service? Well, North Melbourne Rotary is looking for people like you.

You might be interested to hear of the Rotary International strategic plan. It provides a road map for Rotary's future while ensuring it keeps its prominent position on the world stage as an organisation known and respected for its good work worldwide.

Rotary aims to remain a top service organisation with strong local clubs and a thriving foundation that supports the humanitarian work of Rotarians in 34,000 communities.

Our strategic plan is evolving through regular input from Rotarians through surveys, focus groups, committees and meetings that ensure the plan becomes a pathway to help us realise our members' dreams.

Rotary has goals in three strategic priorities. Firstly, we aim to support and strengthen our individual clubs in their activities and innovation. Secondly, we have a focus on humanitarian service such as the eradication of polio. Thirdly, we aim to enhance our public image and awareness by publicising our values and service.

Club members are encouraged to plan for the future, to be innovative, to strengthen their own clubs and to tell the world about what Rotary is and does.

The Rotary International president said: "In business and in life, in order to get where you want to be, you have to know where you are going. When we set clear goals, and measure our progress toward them, we understand ourselves better. We can take better advantage of our strengths and better address our challenges."

lenges."

Rotary International has a strong focus on humanitarian service. For example, it has achieved great success in the eradication of polio. Last year saw 65 per cent fewer new polio cases worldwide than in 2011. Last October marked a milestone when India passed 18 months without a new polio case.

In July, Rotary will launch Future Vision, a new foundation grant model that will streamline and simplify the grant process, and promote sustainable and significant projects. Rotarians will have improved access to grant

funding and more opportunities to collaborate with new partners and organisations.

Rotarians overwhelmingly cite service as their unifying purpose. They want Rotary to help clubs and districts share their ideas, experiences and projects with one another.

Districts and clubs with strategic plans report higher levels of improvement in membership development, retention and public image than clubs without plans. Ways to grow the Rotary movement include developing a club leadership plan and accessing information and resources at www.rotary.org/grants.

If a single club succeeds, that is a success for Rotary. It will ensure that Rotary's service work in both local and international communities will continue to flourish. It combines a Rotary belief in volunteer community action and in reaching out to neighbours in need.

To explore more Rotary worldwide information, visit www.rotary.org or www.rotarydistrict9800.org.au to learn how Rotary works to improve the community worldwide.

Conrad Cunningham is bulletin editor for North Melbourne Rotary



Lots of willing helpers keen to take orders at a recent Rotary community BBQ

Photo: Courtesy NM Rotary



Too Busy to become a Rotary Club Member?

Consider involvement with limited commitment — become a 'Friends of Rotary' member

Discuss any issues you may have about being involved in some way with North Melbourne Rotary Club

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Wintry Woolies' blast leaves us all frozen out

Marg Leser

Residents About Integrated Development (RAiD@3051) Incorporated consists of a group of residents in North Melbourne.

They initially came together to respond to a proposal by Woolworths to build a large-scale development comprising a supermarket, bottle shop and a 16- and 10-storey residential development on the corner of Canning Street, Vaughan Terrace and Macaulay Road in North Melbourne.

RAiD has formally objected to the scale, size, density and foreseeable impact of this site overdevelopment. RAiD is also concerned at the impact of the proposed extended trading hours of 7.00am to 11.00pm of the bottle shop and the impact on existing social infrastructure and traffic flow of the 304 apartments proposed for this site.

Last December, RAiD attended a formal mediation at VCAT together with several other objectors, including the City of Melbourne. The principal objection was to the current form of the proposed development.

As the VCAT mediation did not result in an agreed outcome, RAiD together with the other objectors appealed to VCAT against last year's decision by the Victorian Minister of Planning to grant Woolworths a planning permit.

RAiD raised funds from its members and others in the community to engage a barrister briefed by a pro-bono North Melbourne resident solicitor. This legal expertise ensured the VCAT tribunal members were clear about the

seriousness with which RAiD members object to the inappropriateness and foreseeable impact of this large scale development proposal.

The issues of traffic movement, transport, increased density, hours of operation and impact on local community services and amenity were all raised by RAiD at the VCAT hearing.

Last month VCAT released its judgment upholding the Minister of Planning's decision to grant a permit for the North Melbourne Woolworths' development. This permit was issued subject to only minor variations.

VCAT dismissed outright RAiD and the City of Melbourne's major concerns as to the incompatibility of height with the Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan and stated: "The overwhelming opportunity that this site presents to achieve a substantial intensification of development in a location which is extremely well serviced must be given greater weight than any desire to achieve a development that respects the existing scale of development in the surrounding neighbourhood" (parag. 14, P2313 2012, Melbourne CC v. Minister for Planning).

RAiD is astounded that the tribunal members praised the Woolworths' proposal, given the obvious shortcomings identified by the community.

This decision has trashed good urban design principles and the years of work by Council in developing the Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan — a plan that would have established a 30-year vision for the sustainable growth of the area and which is yet to be implemented into the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

VCAT completely ignored RAiD@3051's



Bird's-eye view of the proposed Woolworths' site

Photo: Gary Bateman

and Council's main submission and the clear direction set out in Amendment C162 (and recommended by the Planning Panel) that until the objectives and strategies of approved structure plans are approved and implemented via a planning scheme amendment, the existing local policies for the area will apply.

However, the tribunal conceded that the development did not comply with the existing local policies.

VCAT's decision represents a planning outcome that is inconsistent with the strategic direction, policies and controls currently being implemented by Council. More importantly, it undermines the strategic planning process and usurps the power of Council, its panels, submitters and the minister to plan for the

Arden-Macaulay area.

Residents need to work together and lobby all levels of government to ensure North Melbourne does not become another Docklands.

Keep up-to-date with Woolworths' proposal and other planning issues by becoming a RAiD member; by providing your email to receive regular email updates, or by accessing the RAiD website: 3051-integrated.com. Or follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/3051-RAID. Or try Twitter: @Raid3051. Or contact RAiD by email: RAID3051@gmail.com.

Marg Leser is a member of RAiD3051

If you and your pup are the best of all PALS, you can bring joy to the needy and seedy

Debra Mayrhofer

Visitors with wet noses and wagging tails are needed for one of the Lort Smith Animal Hospital's most popular volunteer programs.

The Pets are Loving Support (PALS) program has been running for 20 years and brings joy to the residents of more than 50 aged-care facilities, hospitals, hostels and palliative care units across Melbourne.

Demand for the program, particularly from organisations caring for children or the elderly, has exceeded supply and the Lort is calling for interested dog owners to become PALS volunteers. Uniforms are provided for both the humans and dogs.

Lort Smith Animal Hospital CEO Liz Walker said that pet therapy programs such as PALS offer not only enjoyment for the recipients but also health benefits.

"The Lort Smith PALS dogs visit eight wards of the Royal Children's Hospital each week, and some dogs are allowed into the intensive care unit.

"They also work with the physiotherapy department. For example, children who need to be encouraged to get out of bed and get moving after treatment can often be tempted by a dog wanting to walk with them," Dr Walker said.

She added that the effects of the dogs on people with communication difficulties can be profound.

"Volunteers in the aged-care facilities often report that people such as Alzheimer's patients, who otherwise struggle to communicate, respond instinctively to the dogs. It's very moving to see them bridge that gap," Dr Walker said.

The Lort Smith Animal Hospital is the largest public animal hospital in Australia and was established in 1927 to care for the animals of people who were poor and disadvantaged.

The Lort's commitment to both animal and human welfare is at the core of its work and its many programs such as PALS.



PALS volunteers Sue Collier and Waldo

Photo: Courtesy Lort Smith

Debra Mayrhofer is the media relations adviser at Lort Smith Animal Hospital



DENTURES



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Dental Prosthetist Sam Robertson is treating patients every Thursday at Premier Health Partners
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With continual professional development and improvements being made in the industry, Sam prides himself on constantly seeking the latest in technology and materials to improve the quality of the products he can provide to his patients.

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THE CENTRE



The Centre Courses Term 3, 2013 Join The Centre's Learning Program

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

The Centre's Volunteer Program

We have a wide range of opportunities for everyone, such as volunteering in

- Spring Fling 20 October 2013
- writing and editing for our newspaper,
- tutoring, teachers' aide,
- business administration and much more.

Morning Teas

Time: Tuesdays 10:30am – 12pm

Venue: Shop 58

Date: July 2, August 6, September 3

Cost: \$3 per session

Delicious Lunches

Time: 12 – 2pm

Date: June 27

Cost: \$20/\$15 Concession

Centre Adventures (Half/Full Day Bus Trips)

Time: Approximately 9am – 4pm

Meeting Point: Shop 58

Dates: June 18 (Op Shop tour), July 17

Walk Through the City Arcades

Cost: Free

Walking Group

Time: Wednesdays 10 – 11am

Meeting point: Shop 58

Cost: Free

Global Homework Program

Time: Primary Wednesday 3:30pm – 5:30pm

Transition Monday 3:30pm – 5:30pm

Secondary Tuesday 4pm – 6pm

Venue: North Melbourne Library

Date: 22 July to 16 September

Cost: Free

EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Job Readiness Program

Time: Thursdays 9:30am – 12:30pm and

IT skills 1pm – 3pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 25 July to 19 September

Cost: \$125/\$75 Concession

ABC English for Business

Time: Wednesday 12:30pm – 3:30pm/

Wednesday 6.00pm – 9.00pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 19 June to 19 September

Cost: \$100

Certificate IV in Frontline Management (BSB40807)/Diploma of Management (BSB51107) **NEW**

Time: Monday 9am – 3:45pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 22 July to 4 November

Cost: \$1220/\$350 Concession*/Free to volunteers

Introduction to Teachers Aide work

Time: Wednesday 9:30am – 3:30pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 24 July to 30 October

Cost: \$125/\$55 Concession

Introduction to Community Volunteering and Event Management

Time: Weekly for three hours minimum, must commit for two terms.

Venue: Shop 58

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

Volunteers*

Introduction to Media

Time: Weekly for each edition

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 22 July to 20 September

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

Volunteers*

Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110)

Intensive Course:

Time: 6 – 9pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 22 July to 28 October

Cost: \$1500/\$300 Concession*

Upgrade To TAE40110 from old BSZ40198 and TAA40104

Time: Wednesday 9am – 4pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: October 2

Cost: \$425

Certificate III in Education Support (CHC30808)

Time: Wednesday 9:30am – 3:30pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 24 July to 30 October

Cost: \$1225/\$250 Concession*

Introduction to Working in a Call Centre

Time: By agreement

Venue: North Melbourne Library

Dates: July to September

Cost: \$125/55 Concession

Food Handling FDFFS1001A & FDFFS2001A

Time: Two consecutive Fridays 9am – 4pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: July to September

Cost: \$125/ \$55 Concession

COMPUTER PROGRAM

Basic Computers

Time: Friday 9 – 11am

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 26 July to 20 September

Cost: \$80/\$55 concession

Internet and Email

Time: Friday 11am – 1pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 26 July to 20 September

Cost: \$80/ \$55 Concession

Microsoft

Time: Wednesday 1 – 3pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 24 July to 18 September

Cost: \$80/\$55 Concession

Digital Photography

Time: Tuesday 10am – 12pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: July 23, 30, August 13, 20, 27, September 10, 17

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: July 25

Cost: \$35

IGadgets for the E-Challenged

Time: Wednesday 6 – 7:30pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: July 24, 31, August 7, 14

Cost: \$65/50 Concession

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAM

Yoga Program Beginner

Time: Monday 6 – 7:30pm

Venue: The Meat Market

Dates: 22 July to 16 September

Cost: \$165/ \$125 Concession

Yoga Program Intermediate

Time: Monday 7:30 – 9pm

Venue: The Meat Market

Dates: 22 July to 16 September

Cost: \$165/ \$125 Concession

Introduction to Health Studies Simple Steps to Better Health

Time: Thursday 10 – 11:30am or 7 – 8:30pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 24 July to 18 September

Cost: \$55

Feldenkrais

Time: Tuesday 7.30-8.30pm

Venue: The Meat Market

Dates: 23 July to 17 September

Cost: \$100/\$75 Concession

Pilates Program; Beginner? Absolutely!

Time: Thursday 5:30 – 6:15pm

Venue: The Meat Market

Dates: 25 July to 19 September

Cost: \$165/\$125 Concession

Pilates Program Beginner Plus

Time: Thursday 7:30 – 8:15pm

Venue: The Meat Market

Dates: 25 July to 19 September

Cost: \$165/\$125 Concession

Pilates Program Intermediate

Time: Thursday 6:45 – 7:30 pm

Venue: The Meat Market

Dates: 25 July to 19 September

Cost: \$165/\$125 concession

Pilates Program General Class (Beginner Plus & Above) **NEW**

Time: Tuesday 6 – 6:45/Thursday 6 – 6:45pm

Venue: The Meat Market

Dates: 23 July to 19 September

Cost: \$165/\$125 Concession

First Aid Level 2

Time: Saturday 9am – 4pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 27 July

Cost: \$160

Management of Anaphylaxis

Time: Saturday 9:30am – 12:30pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: July to September

Cost: \$55

Yoga for Kids **NEW**

Time: Wednesday 5.30pm – 6.30pm

Venue: North Melbourne Library

Dates: 24 July to 18 September

Cost: \$115/\$100 Concession

ART AND CRAFT PROGRAM

Mosaics

Time: Thursday 1 – 3pm

Venue: North Melbourne Library

Dates: 25 July to 19 September

Cost: \$130

Exploring Calligraphy

Time: Tuesday 7:30 – 9.30pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 23 July to 17 September

Cost: \$115/\$100 concession

The Art Institute

Time: Tuesday 1 – 3pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 23 July to 17 September

Cost: \$55/\$35 concession

Art Warriors (Primary Grades 1, 2 & 3)

Time: Tuesday 3:45 – 5:15pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 23 July to 17 September

Cost: \$115/\$100 concession

Art Heroes (Primary Grade 4, 5 & 6) **NEW**

Time: Monday 3:45 – 5:15pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 22 July to 16 September

Cost: \$115/\$100 Concession

Nature Play

Time: Tuesday 11 – 11:45am

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 23 July to 17 September

Cost: \$5 per session

Introduction to Pottery

Time: Tuesday 9am – 12:30pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 23 July to 17 September

Cost: \$75

Introduction to Music Technology

Time: Tuesday 4 – 6pm

Venue: Shop 58

Dates: 23 July to 17 September

Cost: \$75

*subject to conditions

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST ARE INVITED FOR THE FOLLOWING NEW PROGRAMS

Discovery Walks – Art, Architecture and history

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Certificate III in Floristry

Certificate II in Information, Digital Media and Technology

Certificate II or III in printing and Graphic Arts- print production

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Becoming a Mentor

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Introduction to Commercial Cleaning

Retirement Planning

Finances-Planning, Investments, Personal

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Contact Information

For complete brochure of our courses

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The Centre Shop 58, 58 Errol St,
North Melbourne

Telephone: 93281126

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday
10am to 3pm, Tuesday 10am to 6pm



Spring Fling

2013 STREET FESTIVAL
BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CENTRE

Sharon Orbell

Planning for North and West Melbourne's only annual street festival, The Centre's Spring Fling, kicked off last month. Entering its 36th year, the Spring Fling celebrates what makes our local area such a rich and vibrant area to live and work in. Last year the festival attracted over 15,000 people to Errol Street. The target this year is 18,000.

For the last 36 years The Centre in North Melbourne has been bringing together traders, community agencies, sponsors and volunteers to deliver this festival aimed at connecting the community. According to Michael Halls, The Centre's director, the Spring Fling festival is the flagship activity for this neighbourhood house, which services North and West Melbourne. "We allocate significant resources to the Spring Fling because we believe the Spring Fling connects the community in a way that no other event in North and West Melbourne does. This festival is for everyone living locally, but it also attracts people from outside our area. There is no better celebration showcasing our businesses and agencies."

This year's Spring Fling street festival will be on Sunday 20 October between 11.00am and 6.00pm. Errol Street is closed between Victoria and Queensberry streets for the festival. Stalls and activities will run down Errol Street and in the laneways leading into Errol Street.

Each year a theme is set for the Spring Fling around which activities are programmed. This year's theme explores our community as an "urban village". What connects us to North and West Melbourne and defines this place as such a desirable one to live and work. We want to celebrate the fact that our urban village of North and West Melbourne has everything you need to work, live, study and recreate, all in the same area. Public transport, easy walking and cycling give our locality a distinct advantage over others. More than anything else, the communities of North and West Melbourne are warm and welcoming. It is an attractive and livable village with a diverse and rich heritage. So we hope the Spring Fling will capture all this and celebrate and showcase our connections.

The Spring Fling has a new look and feel. A new logo for the festival was launched last month, and as the festival gets closer expect to see it splashed around North and West Melbourne. We took advice from surveys at last year's festival and we are going to ensure that we have more of the activities planned for our event that you liked. You said you wanted more interactive stuff. Things you can participate in.

A few of the highlights for this year's Spring Fling include a wonderful BoxWars workshop for kids where they can let their imagination loose with cardboard and create weird and wonderful headgear. The folks who are BoxWars are an exciting group of young artists

who had kids queuing up like a Boxing Day sale when they ran workshops at WOMAD in Adelaide. We also have a workshop where you can make and decorate a bicycle basket to encourage you to shop and ride locally.

We are bringing back the hugely successful dog show that was the hit of last year's Spring Fling. We are hoping that you'll start planning your costumes for you and your dog so you can once again amaze us with your determination to have your dog look like you. We are also planning a pop-up urban forest, a long afternoon tea and, of course, fabulous local bands and entertainment.



Bringing spring to last year's festival

The festival is organised by a dynamic group of volunteers and a few key staff appointed by The Centre to ensure the Spring Fling is a success. Last year over 90 volunteers contributed to delivering the festival. Volunteers helped with all aspects of the festival from planning, organising particular events such as the Dog Show, set-up and logistics, marketing and media, stall coordination, community liaison, artist and performer management, cleanup and marshalling.

Volunteers were provided with mentoring, training, guidance, position descriptions and references and acknowledgement of their contribution. Volunteering on the Spring Fling provided experience for some volunteers that has led to employment. In fact this year's festival coordinator, Lisa Tran, was the volunteer coordinator last year and this year's logistics and operations coordinator, Phil Bodey, was also a volunteer last year.

James Brown is also back working on the Spring Fling. He has taken up the role of artistic director for the festival. James is well known to those involved in the Spring Fling last year, having been the lead person behind its success. This year James is also appearing



The 2013 Spring Fling staff and volunteers

Photo: Jim Weatherill

in King Kong the musical, so the Spring Fling is very lucky to have his expertise.

I've taken on the role as executive director for the Spring Fling. I have over 25 years experience working in events, publishing and engagement, and I really love working with such a great team to make the Spring Fling happen.

Funding the Spring Fling is a big task within itself. The Centre makes a financial contribution to the festival, as does the City of Melbourne — these two organisations are the key sponsors. The team working on the Spring Fling then has to be as creative as possible in seeking sponsorship for the festival. We have become adept at writing funding submissions and are just about to start seeking sponsorship more broadly.

Last year we were very lucky to get sponsorship from Yarra Trams, CityWide, NAB North Melbourne, Commonwealth Bank North Melbourne, ANZ North Melbourne, our local real estate agents, the *Leader* newspaper, North Melbourne Football Club, Avant Cards, Queen Victoria Market, FlexiCar and City West Water. We will be approaching all these sponsors again, but we will also be working hard to bring on new sponsors.

One of the key goals in running the Spring Fling is to ensure we have a free festival that offers participants a wide range of interesting and engaging activities and innovative entertainment. We also try to keep the cost down for all stallholders — only recouping infrastructure costs. There is no profit in the Spring Fling. In order to do this we need sponsorship, donations and volunteer effort.

We've already recruited some of our key volunteers to the Spring Fling team, but we are looking for more. If you want experience working on a community street festival then pop in to The Centre at 58 Errol Street and let us know what you might be interested in doing. Ask for Lisa Tran or you can email her at LisaT@centre.org.

The Spring Fling street festival must have trader and community agency involvement to be a success. Last year we had just over

100 trader and community stalls at the Spring Fling. Feedback from those who participated was overwhelmingly positive, but there were still a large number of local businesses, traders and community agencies not represented and our aim this year is to get much more involvement. Emma Jenkins, a bachelor of entertainment student at JMC Academy, is our stalls coordinator. Emma and Lisa will be visiting all local businesses, traders and community agencies to work with them to get them involved in the Spring Fling.

We want to work with traders and community agencies to ensure they get the most out of the Spring Fling. The more we can get involvement in the planning of the Spring Fling from North and West Melbourne's community, the better it is going to be. We had over 60 of you represented at the Spring Fling launch last month, but we would like to get more involved.

Volunteers, traders and community groups are invited to our next Spring Fling planning committee. It will be held on Thursday 27 June between 5.30pm and 7.00pm at The Centre, 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne. Please email Lisa Tran at LisaT@centre.org if you would like to find out more, or drop into 58 Errol Street.

Join us on Sunday 20 October as we celebrate the 2013 Spring Fling street festival.

Sharon Orbell is Spring Fling executive director

Follow Spring Fling on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/springfling12



Follow us on Instagram: SpringFlingFestival



Come and decorate a basket for your bicycle at this year's Spring Fling

Frances McMillan

This year the Global Homework program started off on a great note. The children have been enthusiastic, having fun and focussed on their homework tasks.

We introduced a couple of changes this year because we had a high number of students wanting to join us. Now we offer three sessions. We introduced the Monday night session to cater for the needs of students in year 6 who are making their transition to secondary school. The Tuesday night continues to be for secondary students while Wednesday is for primary students in years 4 and 5.

I am pleased to let you know too that we have a great team of volunteer tutors this year who are consistent, regular, highly skilled and very patient and caring. This has a big impact on the program as the children feel settled, secure and very well supported in their work. The atmosphere is lovely.

Our reading and writing challenges with our youngest students continue. In term 1, the children read as many of the “Horrible Histories” series as they could and we had a “Horrible Histories” party at the end of term. Right now we are reading stories about horses because this year celebrates the 100th birthday of Elyne Mitchell, who wrote the famous Australian children’s book *The Silver Brumby*.

As part of this the children did a creative writing piece about “A Horse”. Here are their stories.

Frances McMillan is coordinator of the Foundation Skills program at The Centre

Alec - The Horse

I had a horse. It was very fast and very strong. He had very big teeth. I loved it very much. It ate everything. But he died from a heart attack. I was very lonely and I died.



Isaiah - The Majestic Horse

Once upon a time there was a talking horse called Bob. People treated him differently. One day he went out in to the wild and got lost and he lost his voice. Eventually he found his way back and lived happily ever after.



Asiya - Curly

There was once a very famous horse named Curly. She worked in the circus. Everybody loved Curly because of her wonderful famous acts. A lot of people came to see her. One day, while Curly was performing, something terrible happened. She was preparing to get up and walk on her two back legs when she slipped! Curly neighed in agony. The next morning Curly’s owner, Mark, woke her up early to get prepared and train her so her leg could finally heal. A few weeks passed and Curly was as good as new.



Desmond - Black Caviar Stolen

Boom! goes the starting gun as all the doors opened for the horses to gallop straight out. Black Caviar is in the middle with McGinnings at the front. Voo is just in front of Black Caviar. A second later Black Caviar trots in front of Voo and past McGinnings. Black Caviar is now in third place and this might be the first time she ever loses. In front of Black Caviar is Michael Ace who is cutting him off but Black Caviar tricks him by trying to go one way then the other. He gets in front of Michael Ace and draws with McGinnings. With just a little way to go .. Bang ...a gun shot is fired. The horses start throwing down their jockeys and trotting out. Everyone is running out. A man is following behind in a car. What will happen next?



Jessica - The White Horse

I’ve ridden many horses before but I like the white horse. Her name is Alison She is 3 years old and very friendly. She walks very slowly but if you use a stick to smack her bottom she can run very fast. The first time I rode her she didn’t like me much. She kept moving her body and stood up. I fell off into the water. My whole body was wet. She just turned around and went back to her house I like her when she is eating. I gave her some grass and she ate the grass and my hand! When I took my hand out of her mouth it was covered in saliva! Oh my God! Then she kept her mouth open and her saliva was dripping a lot. It was so funny. This is a funny and friendly horse. Do you like her?



Akram - The Missing Horse

There was a group of horses in a paddock and one day the owner left the gate open because his wife called him to come and get his coffee. Pegasus, the beautiful black horse pushed the door with his head and went out without asking his mum or dad. He went into the deep, dark woods...off on an adventure.



Vincent Luc - The Legend of the Three Horses

Legend has it that there have been three horses belonging to the three gods...Zeus, Poseidon and Hades. The horses have the same abilities as their owners. Do you believe that they were immortal? Are you sure? “Zeus , my horse has been missing for weeks” Poseidon alerted Zeus. “What?!!!!!! My horse is missing too!” Hades says, rushing through with a worried face. Then Zeus grinned. “Ha ha. You are so stupid. I only got those normal horses to fool you on April Fool’s day!” “Ok then. Who Cares?” THE HORSES: “I wonder if our owners are worried about us?” “I don’t know!”



Tahra - The Forgotten Horse

Once upon a time there were 4 horse friends but one of them was missing and everyone had forgotten about him. One day a little girl was skipping in the rainforest “Neighhhh” said the small forgotten horse. “Where are you horsey?” The little girl was looking for the horse for at least an hour and then she found him. “There you are horsey. I’m going to keep you” All the horse said was a high-pitched “Neighhhh” I think that was a yes,” she whispered, so she took him home and fed him, brushed him and made a barn for him.



Louis - The Horse at War

Once there was a horse called Douglass. He was the first to go to war...and he was in the plane before he knew it. All the army men had their own horses. Douglass’s army man’s name was Sergeant Bob. They went to war in Israel and that was the last of them because when they were engaged in battle the plane was shot.



Asmaa - Asmaa Getting a Pet Horse

One day there was a girl called Asmaa who was desperate to get a pet horse. She had been asking her parents if she could get a horse now because she was in grade 4. But her parents said no because she wouldn’t feed him or ride him. Asmaa promised that she could. She went to school early the next day and her parent’s said “ You will get a surprise when you get back from school”. When Asmaa came home she was very excited and asked her parents “Can I see my surprise?” “Yes. Follow us” said her parents. “ Close your eyes, Asmaa. Ok. Now you can open your eyes” WOW! It was a horse and Asmaa’s family was the only one with a pet horse. They lived happily ever after.



Ella - The Black Brumby in War

There was once a horse whose name was Johnny. One day he was training for war because war was in 1 week. After that he was ready. Almost all the men died. Johnny was out there fighting with the men. They were fighting for their freedom because the people of London were in charge of them. Johnny was the boss of the horses and he was fantastic. He fought for the men and for his wife. (His wife stayed at the barn) After an hour they were still fighting. Johnny was a brave horse. The men fought alongside Johnny and they fought and fought until noon. Johnny, his wife and the men won their freedom.



COMMUNITY

Let's Make
a Date

Suzie Luddon

The perils
of ferals

OMG! 'Tracey' was in hysterics as she called up her best friend after a particularly bad date. This one really took the cake.

Walking into a bar to meet him on their first date after their initial coffee meeting, she immediately got that sinking feeling that anyone who's been dating for a while will know — that feeling that signals disappointment and the sure knowledge that there won't be another date.

His initial crime? He was rocking the Jimi Hendrix-circa-Woodstock 1969 look, wearing a long flowing, purple, crushed velvet jacket over a groovy shirt with silhouettes of naked women printed on it. She thought to herself that if he was her boyfriend he wouldn't be wearing those clothes, a thought quickly replaced by the comforting certainty that he would never be her boyfriend, so what he wore was already, 30 seconds into the date, irrelevant.

She suppressed the urge to turn around and walk out again, which she instantly regretted when he proceeded to inform her that she looked "tired". Not pretty or nice or lovely — just tired. Listen up, guys; don't say this to a woman on a date, unless you want it to be a quick and final date.

Resisting the by-now deafening inner screams to run, Tracey pledged to herself to hang in there in the interests of being polite, reasoning to the screamer within that things could only get better. And they did in one sense. It was a busy Friday night in Melbourne and the bars were full to overflowing.

Doing a bit of a bar hop, she spent a lot of time standing around while he braved the throng lining up for bar service. This was preferable to spending time with him, as by now, 45 minutes into the date, he was staking his claim by putting his arm around her for a random photographer in a bar, grabbing her hand when they were walking between bars

and showing disapproval when she ordered a lemonade.

Tracey just wasn't into it. (She clearly needs to learn some skills on how to exit gracefully.) When she signalled that she was ready to leave, he insisted on asking her what she thought of him, and was considerate enough not only to ask this question but to do so while they were standing underneath a speaker blaring out the latest hip hop beats.

Mumbling that she really didn't know as they'd only just met — being too polite to call him as she saw him — Tracey squirmed uncomfortably as he responded that she was clearly damaged goods and that he wasn't interested in taking things further.

He insisted on walking down the street with her, all the while accusing her of being phobic about dating men with children and trying to lay all the blame at her feet to assuage his own feelings of rejection. Understandable I guess, but Tracey had to call her bestie for a debrief as she couldn't quite believe how much he'd twisted things around.

Was she really damaged goods? Was she right to judge him so early on? Her 'bff' dutifully reassured her that she'd just dodged a bullet and to laugh it off and chalk it up to experience. Which she did.

Fortunately for her, she has enough resilience to withstand the arrows that can come flying out of nowhere in the dating sphere, and she just hopes that one day (soon, please!)

Cupid's arrow will strike. In the meantime, it's back to the frontline.

Suzie Luddon writes regularly about the perilous world of online dating



Drawing: Ava Macmaster

the News
Garden Patch

Natasha Grogan

Winter is here and this time it brings with it goodbyes. That's right, friends. This will be my last gardening article. (Hold back those tears!)

I am sad to be saying goodbye. Since I wrote my first article eight editions ago, in the autumn of 2011, I have loved the challenge of collecting my scattered thoughts and spending time quietly tapping away at my computer to share them with you.

Last year I finished as a Stephanie Alexander garden specialist after almost five years. Following many solitary pep talks, I decided to throw myself full time into a side project that I had been working on for a couple of years: my business, The Sage Garden. Running it has become more than a full time job; it is like my second child.

My idea for The Sage Garden had developed over years working with schools and families. I became acutely aware that there was a need for gardening education at home as well as in our schools.

Many families want to grow their own food but few feel confident in getting started. I began the business by offering home-based programs that educated and encouraged children and their families to grow organic fruit, herbs and vegetables.

Since I started my own teaching career in a kinder back in 1997 (I swear I'm still only 24!), I have loved working with young kids. As a result, this year I have developed a series of incursions for child-care centres, kindergartens and primary schools.

My aim is to bring the joys of gardening to children, their families and communities, and to nurture a sense of wonder, excitement and empowerment through growing healthy food in a way that is also healthy and sustainable for our environment.

Adieu! 'Tis my time to be leafing

In January I was lucky enough to be interviewed for a piece in The Design Files, an online blog that reaches a silly amount of people every day. The exposure this gave to The Sage Garden has made me a very busy girl and I have been overwhelmed and thrilled by the response.

I have also had to shift gears, as I juggle a beautiful one-year-old with working days that are never the same. My husband and I are also expecting our second baby (third, if you include the business!) and this has required a further gear shift. We are due in November and are very, very excited.

So with these exciting and time-consuming treasures, something had to give. If you think you will miss me madly, I have a The Sage Garden Facebook page where I give a gardening tip every Saturday morning.

But enough about me! We are here to talk gardening! The question I get asked most is "What can I plant now?" so here are my top items to plant for each season:

In winter, it's broad beans, broccoli, kale, parsnip and potatoes. In spring, it's Asian greens, capsicum, chili, eggplant and leek.

In summer, it's corn, cucumber, pumpkin, tomato and zucchini. In autumn, it's cabbage, cauliflower, celery, dwarf beans and peas

No matter what different books tell you, the following plants can be planted at any time of year: beetroot, carrot, lettuce, radish, spinach, spring onions and silver beet (I always plant rainbow silver beet. It is so beautiful). They may produce different shapes and sizes, but the flavour is always there.

Finally, I would like to leave you with some of my favourite tips for good gardening. Here they are:

- Aerate your soil rather than digging it up. This simply means to push your fork down into the soil as far as it will go. Repeat this throughout your garden, being careful not to disturb roots.
- Apply seaweed or fish liquid every two to three weeks but not when you are about to harvest.
- Pick the leaves of lettuce and spinach from the outside to prolong the harvest.
- In my opinion, there is only one true solution to removing caterpillars: pick them out with your fingers and do it as often as possible.
- Drip-line irrigation systems are worth the



Natasha gives a hand to Dash, Ripley and Finn Photo: Melanie Brunt

time and money.

- If you are going to water by hand, make sure you water deep down to the roots.
- Gardening is hard work, but it is a pleasure, not a chore. Embrace your time in nature. It is a rare experience in this modern world as it takes us to a place that is true and honest.

So there it is: my last article. I hope you have enjoyed reading my words as much as I have enjoyed writing them. See you in the dirt.

Natasha Grogan is director of The Sage Garden. This is, sadly, the last of her seasonal gardening hints written for the News

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A writer, a helper, and proud of his heritage, Kevin Wong Hoy showed a deep faith in life

Kevin Fredrick Wong Hoy
20.3.1948 – 5.4.2013
Social worker, historian, author

Janet Graham

More than 100 people crammed into St Mary's Anglican Church, North Melbourne, for the funeral of Kevin Wong Hoy in April. As Kevin had requested, the congregation sang 'Amazing Grace' and the readings included Ecclesiastes 3:1–8. The Reverend Craig D'Alton said Kevin's was a life lived well and in accordance with the tenets of this biblical passage.

A highly respected social worker to his former colleagues at International Social Service Australia, Kevin was better known in North and West Melbourne for his quiet friendliness to neighbours passing in the street and his kindness to fellow parishioners at St Mary's.

Described in the tribute by Dr David Wood, a friend of 47 years, as having a deep faith, Kevin's Christianity manifested itself in practical actions such as making sure elderly people attending the 8.00am service were seated comfortably and that communion was brought to them.

David met Kevin when the latter entered St John's College, University of Queensland, to study for a Bachelor of Arts. There, Kevin showed considerable talent as an artist, designing backdrops for student productions of Gilbert and Sullivan, in which he also performed. Kevin added a Bachelor of Social Work and, much later, an MA in Asian studies at La Trobe University. He also won a major award for a painting.

As a social-work leader, Kevin founded or co-founded two important groups. The first was SWAIDS (Social Workers and AIDS), formed to address the lack of expertise among the social-work community when the AIDS epidemic hit Melbourne in the 1980s. The second was SWASIA, formed in the early 1990s to provide communication, support and celebration of the culture of Asian-Australian social workers.

He worked with the student union at Melbourne University to establish an AIDS/STD Education Policy Development Committee.

Kevin was active for some years in the North (and West) Melbourne Association, taking a particular interest in planning issues around Arden Street, where he lived, and attending several VCAT hearings on behalf of his neighbours. He also represented the Association on the Police Community Consultative Committee and enjoyed being the social representative, organising some lovely dinners with Nan Nankervis for NWMA members.

He was a member of the Hotham History Project and interviewed Chinese-Australian family members for an oral history project in 2006.

A fourth-generation Chinese Australian, about 20 years ago Kevin became interested in his own heritage and the inadequately told story of the Chinese contribution to Australia's history and culture. While completing his MA at La Trobe he studied Mandarin in the same class as Sophie Couchman, curator of the Chinese Museum in Melbourne. Sophie said Kevin was passionate about uncovering the injustices faced by Chinese Australians.

Kevin was instrumental in establishing the Chinese-Australian Family Historians of Victoria (CAFHOV) and Chinese Heritage in Northern Australia (CHINA) Inc, serving as president of both.

In May 2002, ABC Radio interviewed Kevin about his role in the revival of the Chinatown settlement in Croydon, a town with a population of about 400 in remote north-west Queensland, whose Chinese goldminers had been largely forgotten. Kevin's great-grandfather had run the town bakery, and one might speculate that this connection sparked his curiosity about the Chinese cook who would feature in *Cheon of the Never Never*.

As president of CAFHOV in 2007, Kevin worked to get a stele put up in the Buckland Valley, near Bright, to recognise the thousands of Chinese who were driven out of the valley by other goldminers 150 years earlier. The flyer promoting his talk for the Hotham History Project explained:

"The European rioters who planned the attack against the Chinese miners at the Buckland goldfield on 4 July 1857 were charged with affray, but appear to have escaped the more serious charges of murder or manslaughter ... Of the estimated 150–200 rioters ... eleven were apprehended; but of these, only four were eventually convicted."

Kevin edited three conference publications for the Dragon Tails conferences, the last two with Kevin Rains. These were *Rediscovered past: China in North Queensland* (2007), *Rediscovered past: China in northern Australia* (2009) and *Rediscovered past: Valuing Chinese roles across the north* (2012). He compiled oral histories of the Yet Foy family of Queensland and wrote many journal articles.

Visibly weakened by his illness, Kevin bravely launched his final work, *Cheon of the Never Never*, last December at the Chinese Museum, in a room filled with friends and supporters.

"We were delighted and honoured that he chose to launch the book at the Chinese Museum," Sophie Couchman told the *News*, adding that Kevin had shown incredible perseverance and drive in researching and writing it.

Kevin was pragmatic and uncomplaining to the end. He is survived by his beloved mother, son Simon, Simon's fiancée, Shannon, and their daughter, Chloe Rose. Kevin's ashes will be interred in Cairns at a family ceremony.

Janet Graham is advertising coordinator for the *News*. She prepared this obituary with assistance from Kevin's colleagues in the Australian Association of Social Workers



Cheon of the Never Never
by Kevin Wong Hoy
(Arcadia, 2012,
RRP: \$22.95)

Kevin Wong Hoy's final work was *Cheon of the Never Never*, a biographical account of the life and times of the Chinese cook and gardener in Jeannie Gunn's *We of the Never Never*.

Cheon was a lively character, and clearly much loved by Mrs Gunn. Kevin's research into her papers shows that long after she left Elsey Station she still had a fondness for Cheon. While she returned to Melbourne after her husband's death, Cheon remained in northern Australia, working for various employers and returning to China on occasions, before retiring there.

Kevin's book shows that Cheon was a great cook, much in demand for his talents. As well as his cooking skills, it was also his gift as a gardener that enabled him to

provide meals from the basic supplies in the Territory at the time. The book also demonstrates Anglo-Chinese relationships in the early 1900s, where Chinese cooks were highly respected for their craft, and at the same time seen as objects of amusement, for their use (or lack) of English and their 'exotic' personalities.

It is no mean feat to choose a character in a well-known book and attempt to uncover his history. Records are always sparse for those who serve, limited to household accounts and occasionally being mentioned in passing. It must have taken an incredible amount of research and travel to compile the information to get even a sense of Cheon. And under such difficult circumstances, in the last months of his life, this is precisely what Kevin did.

While it may not be possible for some to read Mrs Gunn's book today, it being somewhat dated, it is wonderful for all who have enjoyed the pioneering story to have those well-loved and remembered characters brought to life with such cultural deference and respect. And for that, Kevin, we thank you and will always miss you.

Heather McKay is North Melbourne Library's reading services and local history librarian



Proud grandfather Kevin Wong Hoy holds Chloe Rose's artwork Photo: Shannon Parker

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Holler out loud and reclaim our streets back

Clementine Bendle-Thompson

Two weeks before horrific events on Brunswick's Sydney Road last September violently thrust the street harassment of Melbourne's women into the public eye, three young female university students launched Hollaback! Melbourne, our local branch of an international movement.

Street harassment has many forms, including shouting, staring, following, groping, flashing and touching. It could be receiving wolf whistles from a car or being groped on a crowded tram. In fact, 90 per cent of women will have experienced it by the age of 19.

These actions occur in public spaces — at universities, on public transport or on our city streets — and are perpetrated by strangers to strangers. Simply by being in a public space, women are often made to feel like public property. Australia legislates against these acts of sexual harassment in its workplaces, but they go unremarked upon on our streets.

These actions intimidate and distress their victims, even if their perpetrators or bystanders may think they are harmless. They render public spaces frightening, and untimely restrict and confine women through fear and shame. They exist on a continuum of gender-based violence and power relations, the extremes of which are played out upon women like Jill Meagher, who attempted to walk independently through a public space.

Jessica Voyers, a University of Melbourne masters of engineering student and co-founder of Hollaback! Melbourne, is sitting in a friendly North Melbourne café. She recalls how founders Alanna Inserra and Isabelle Burns, both studying politics honours at Melbourne, experienced street harassment and were concerned how women's day-to-day experience living in cities differed from that of men.

Alanna had learnt about Hollaback! whilst on a student exchange to Seattle, and believed that Melbourne needed a chapter. Jessica was

recruited to help with the technological and design side of the movement. She explains that she had begun to feel strongly about street harassment within a few days of moving to North Melbourne, when she was verbally harassed the first time she rode her bike up Arden Street.

The Hollaback! movement began in New York in 2005. It was inspired by Thao Nygen, a commuter who used her mobile phone camera to take a photograph of a man harassing her and exposing himself on a train. Whilst the photo was initially ignored by police, it went viral after she posted it on photograph-sharing website Flickr, from where it ultimately made its way to the front page of New York's *Daily News*.

The image inspired discussion about the harassment women face every day, and led Samuel Carter, now Hollaback! board chair, to remark to his female friends: "You live in a different city than we do." A small group of men and women were inspired to create a blog where women could record their experiences of harassment and plot on a virtual map where their harassment occurred.

A free app for iPhone and android has since been developed, allowing women to record their harassment as soon as it happens. As well as this, the website acts to educate people about the pervasive effect of street harassment in our cities and encourages by-standers to interrupt when they see harassment occurring. Known as the 'I've got your back!' campaign, Hollaback! has since spread to 50 cities in 17 countries around the world.

For young women living in cities, coping mechanisms are a part of daily life. Planning routes so as to circumvent certain streets, avoiding public transport, pretending to talk on a mobile phone, wearing headphones and holding keys between their fingers are all automatic habits we may not even realise that we do unless we are reminded.

Jessica describes her habits: "I ride my bike everywhere I can, rather than take public transport; I avoid it at all costs. If I'm going out at night I'll wear extra baggy layers over my

clothes so I don't attract attention. I'll call my housemates to come and get me, so I can be in a group. I try to give off a general 'Don't talk to me' attitude, avoid eye contact and look like I have somewhere to be."

Another common practice she notes is for young women to lie and give a fake name when strangers ask, or to make up where they are going and whether they have a boyfriend, all to avoid unwanted interactions.

When women talk about their experiences of harassment with friends and partners, they are often met with questions and statements like "That's what happens when you go out by yourself at night", "Why were you on that tram by yourself?" and "What do you expect when you're dressed like that?"

Women are made to feel responsible for their harassment, or are chastised for not just "taking it as a compliment". The women who send

their experiences into Hollaback! report their frustration at their feelings of powerlessness.

The ability to report their encounters helps to restore their sense of control, which is crucial when women are made to feel so vulnerable. Hollaback! believes that just because street harassment is considered normal, an unpleasant fact of life in the city, doesn't mean it has to stay this way.

In April, Hollaback! Melbourne organised a colourful 'chalk walk' on Sydney Road during which women were able to inscribe their experiences of harassment on the pavement. Blocks and blocks of lively Brunswick Street were covered in colourful chalk.

In big, pink letters, one statement read: "It's not a compliment if she's scared."

Clementine Bendle-Thompson will write regularly for the News



Hollaback! Melbourne's Jessica Voyers Photo: C. Bendle-Thompson

POLITICS & ENVIRONMENT

Regional Rail is going full steam ahead but locals' safety and health are being shunted

Steve Jasper

It is not quiet on the Western (Melbourne) front. The Regional Rail project is going full steam ahead (pardon the pun), although there were considerable disruptions over the Easter weekend.

The Regional Rail Link Authority (RRLA) offered residents accommodation during this period, but residents in Railway Place have found that the railway works have been more disruptive at times other than the Easter weekend.

One of the concerns with the Regional Rail development in West Melbourne is the creation of a tunnel-like space in Railway Place near Dudley Street, the design of which has been approved by the City of Melbourne without consultation with local residents. According to one local it looks like a "hideous dark space" and is an intimidating and non-enticing place to walk through.

This is an important thoroughfare from North Melbourne station, not only to and from Festival Hall but also to the Docklands area and the stadium, and is used by many daily commuters to the city.

A design drawing of the space appeared in the *Age* late last year. The concept shows a dark,

cavernous space decorated with pictures of rock stars, including the late Jimi Hendrix; interestingly, Jimi never played at Festival Hall, and is therefore not a part of Festival Hall's long and colourful history in West Melbourne.

A more serious concern than inappropriate left-handed guitarists is people's safety — a dark, enclosed area that looks sinister does nothing to enhance pedestrians' wellbeing.

Asbestos fears are now a major worry for residents in West Melbourne. On Good Friday, watchful residents noticed that workers were wearing hazmat gear. In response to residents' enquiries, the RRLA stated it was "not certain whether the material contained asbestos". One resident was of the opinion that it was easy enough to test for asbestos; surely residents have a right to know.

Work on the Dudley Street overpass extension was much quieter for a considerable time after Easter. Since then, the RRLA has communicated to residents that "due to the

nature of a live rail environment, there is potential for asbestos to occur along the rail corridor because of associated historic use.

"Although every effort has been taken to determine the presence of asbestos prior to works commencing, the presence and management of asbestos is considered during each work activity. If detected, appropriate measures will be implemented to ensure safe removal and containment."

The finding of asbestos has added to residents' concerns about increased diesel pollution from the number of trains that will use the tracks 10 metres from homes. The WHO has

listed diesel as a class-1 carcinogen, equally as harmful as asbestos. The lack of transparency from the RRLA on a potentially serious health concern, especially with the presence of young children in Railway Place, is profoundly disheartening to West Melbourne residents.

The major frustration that West Melbourne residents report when dealing with the RRLA is that it appears to do exactly as it pleases, with community consultation merely 'window-dressing'. They cite a lack of transparency and a lack of reliable information in dealing with the RRLA's formidable public relations and communication machine.

It appears that the City of Melbourne has granted approval for building works without consulting with residents, and the RRLA doesn't need to undergo the same planning procedures required by the usual permit process to undertake significant building works in the area.

Residents and the Fair Go For West Melbourne group would like to see more transparency and community consultation in the development of the Regional Rail project in West Melbourne.

Steve Jasper is politics and environment editor for the News



Drawing: Ava Macmaster

She's the life of the party

Jennifer Kanis

It was revealed in this very newspaper recently that I am a passionate Collingwood supporter and my husband is a passionate ABC fan (Anyone But Collingwood).

This is a clash that, I admit, has been the source of some tension in our marriage. It was brought to a head when our son, Blake, arrived on the scene nearly two years ago.

Could either of us be trusted not to try and influence Blake's team choice just a little bit? I have a pretty thick skin on most things, but not when it comes to Collingwood. I wasn't keen to take the chance that our son would grow up ABC like his father.

And I don't think his father was too keen on the opposite outcome. Strangely, he became surprisingly nervous when I confessed that "Good old Collingwood forever" was my preferred lullaby.

Then a friend gave Blake a North Melbourne Kangaroos' beanie at the start of last season and solved what was shaping as a serious familial rift.

Surprisingly (at least for this Collingwood supporter), I was very happy with Blake wearing his North Melbourne beanie.

One of the privileges of my current role as this area's representative in State parliament and my previous role as a City of Melbourne councillor is that I am able to talk to organisations such as the Kangaroos about their hopes and aspirations, and then to do what I can to help them reach their goals.

And hasn't The Huddle lived up to its goal to bring education, sport and community together? I was not surprised when I heard it won the Sports Leadership Award at this year's National Migration and Settlement Awards.

When I visit schools in the electorate I often bump into groups from North Melbourne showing kids of all abilities how to improve their skills. I know that in a few years when Blake starts school, he will be the beneficiary of this program.

Right now, though, he is just learning how to kick a ball and we love it that we can go and watch the team train at Arden Street and have a play on the oval. Not many other elite sporting clubs share their ground so well with the community.

In preparation for our attendance at this year's Unity Cup, where an all-girls team in the blue and white was a key attraction, we bought Blake a North Melbourne guernsey in a size he will 'grow into'.

Now, he wears it like a dress and looks very, very happy with himself when he sees others, people he looks up to, in the same outfit.

While it will ultimately be Blake's choice what football team he decides to support — and yes, I am steeling myself in case he decides on ABC — this Collingwood supporter is happy to see her son in the colours of a local team that demonstrates what is good about this suburb and the people in it.

Jennifer Kanis MP will write a regular (non-political!) column for the News

Worms, chickens and children bless a church's organic garden

Steve Jasper

Walk past St Alban's Anglican church in Melrose Street, North Melbourne, and you might see off to one side a few plots with some vegetables.

St Alban's is home to Sustainability Street's organic garden in which vegetables are grown without pesticides. To see it, visit the church on the corner of Melrose and Mark streets, then enter the garden on Mark Street. So, let's go on a short tour of the garden!

There are, as you might expect, some nicely laid out plots and some raised. With winter's chilly breath on the garden, it's still a lovely green space, with some cheery bell peppers adding a splash of red.

During winter months there is limited planting and gardening, but lots of root vegetables and leafy greens can still be grown in the cooler months.

One of the keys to success in organic gardening is 'companion planting': putting plants together that will repel pests. For example, marigolds repel pests that plague tomato plants, so it's a good idea to plant them together to protect the tomatoes.

Over in the corner of the garden is a worm farm that is lovingly tended for compost. There's also a herb garden (there's nothing like fresh herbs from the garden!), and stone fruits on a tree.

About a dozen chickens roam the garden

— and are kept well away from the worm farm! They wander the garden but need close supervision. They busily scabble around, scratching through the grass, looking for grubs and whatever they can get.

There are also lots of children playing happily here too. It's a very family-friendly atmosphere. What better way can you think of to get children to eat their vegetables than to have them help grow them?

Over to the front of the church, separated from the vegetable garden, is a quiet space filled with indigenous plants. In the front there are some low-growing plants such as *Brachyscome multifida* (cut-leaved daisy), an indig-

enous daisy with light flowers, and *Wahlenbergia stricta* (native bluebells) adding a splash of colour even in the winter months.

Behind these are some taller *Dianella* (native flax) and some everlasting shrubs. This corner of the garden has been dedicated as a memorial to a member of the congregation of St Alban's who passed away. It's a space for reflection, and has been landscaped by the Sustainability Street group.

This beautiful spot is the heart and soul of the garden. What a wonderful tribute it is.

Steve Jasper is politics and environment editor for the News



Annie Saunders in St Alban's organic garden Photo: Jim Weatherill



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Cath's off and running in the big election race

Maurice Gaul

Cath Bowtell is proud of her ancestry. "It was bog Irish all the way," she smiles. "Mum was a Kelly, one of nine, and the family were farmers and publicans."

Growing up in suburban Glen Iris, she attended Kildara, a Brigidine convent, and vividly recalls her year 10 history teacher, Nina Marantz-Patterson. "She asked us questions that we had to go away and research."

"She taught the French Revolution by forming us into classrooms factions, raising issues of power and oppression then sending us off to university libraries. At least we weren't doing the gold rush again," she laughs.

Cath studied Melbourne arts and law in the early 1980s. She then worked for eight years for an education union then for 15 years at the ACTU. Since 2011 she has been outgoing chief executive of Agest Super.

North Melbourne has been home for Cath and husband Peter since 1988. "We first lived in two student-share houses in Errol Street then made the big move when we bought in Dryburgh Street."

Daughters Ella, 15, and Maggie, 12, had classic North Melbourne childhoods. "First, Curzon Street Children's Centre, then Errol

Street primary, and now Uni High. Ella's in year 10, Maggie in year seven."

The other family member is Lola, the groodle. "She's a golden retriever-poodle cross, a beautiful dog. She knows what 'Come' means, but often she'll just circle and circle. It means longer walks than planned," Cath grins.

"We walk her at Clayton Reserve, near the Lost Dogs' Home. There's a whole dog community down there. Sometimes I meet people in the street and have to admit I don't know their name, just their dog's name."

A keen sportswoman, Cath is a gym regular and has swum at the City Baths since 1989. "I played netball at Royal Park until last year when I hurt my knee. By then I was coming up against Ella's schoolmates with their mothers barracking from the sidelines. I was a defender, due to my inability to throw a goal."

A running convert in her late 30s, she has completed a couple of half marathons. "I'd like to do a full marathon, but I just don't have the time to train. When I run, I listen to zydeco music and the songs of the '80s," she smiles.

Cath enjoys reading Helen Garner and other Australian women writers. She recently read John Lanchester's *Capital* about post-GFC London. "It captured changes in British society and the fragility of the country's wealth and social cohesion."



Cath Bowtell chatting with Hawa Del Photo: Jim Weatherill

She recalls her school's focus on social justice but says she was politicised by Jeff Kennett's attack on community organisations. It led her to join the ALP about 1992.

Feminism has been a motif of Cath's life. "Everything I've been involved in — childcare, school, community-based groups — has been to improve the lot of women."

She admits it has been a challenge bringing up two girls without, to use her word, being "doctrinaire". "We didn't ban pink plastic in the house and there's lots of rom-coms," she laughs.

A recent trip to France to visit friends gave a chance to practise her rusty schoolgirl French, but her favourite travel destination is much closer to home.

"We go to Anglesea every summer. The beach, walks, cooking, eating, reading — I love a stress-free January. Lola loves the beach too. She doesn't swim, but she wades!"

Maurice Gaul is editor of the News

September will bring a federal election. The News spoke with Adam Bandt MP (Greens) and Cath Bowtell (ALP) about everything except politics.

Adam an even money chance in September

Maurice Gaul

Adam Bandt recalls his first political action as a secondary student in Perth. "I was at Hollywood High — yes, that was its name! — and I attended a protest against nuclear-powered American warships entering Fremantle Harbour."

For our local Greens' federal MP, the political die had been cast. It firmed even more when he did arts and law at Perth's Murdoch University. "I studied environmental ethics and philosophy, and those years shaped my views on social justice. I was also SRC president," he says.

Young Adam fell in love with Melbourne during a visit in his late teens. "I was walking through the city after a Friday night football game, and it was a revelation that you could go into a bookshop then go and have a coffee at that hour. I knew then it was where I wanted to be."

After graduating, he arrived in Melbourne in 1996. He had 10 years with Slater & Gordon, completed his PhD at Monash, then started

work as a barrister.

On the home front, Adam has lived in West and North Melbourne since 2005. Two years ago he moved from Parkville to Flemington where he lives with fiancée Claudia whom he will marry at the end of the year.

They have a ready-made family of two border collie-kelpie crosses, Max and Albi. "They came from the RSPCA and they're training at the Lost Dogs' Home, learning to jump through hoops. They helped us landscape our back yard by digging it up," he grins.

Adam keeps fit with runs along the Moonee Ponds Creek and visits to the gym. "I also like to cook, especially on Sunday afternoons when I don't have to answer the phone. Last weekend I cooked goat stifado, a Greek stew, followed by a glass of red."

A favourite local travel spot is along the Great Ocean Road, but a recent trip didn't go strictly to plan. "One of our dogs impaled himself on a stick, so that needed an urgent visit to the vet," he laments.

When travelling further afield, Adam is fond of Germany. "At 17, I did a student exchange in Bremen and, perhaps due to my ancestry, fell in

love with Berlin. Claudia and I hired a flat there a few years ago. I'm a bit rusty, but I did an interview in German on SBS recently," he says.

A one-time Dockers' fan, he is now a proud member of North Melbourne. "The Huddle is great and North has made a real effort to be a genuine community club, engaging with people from the flats and refusing to take pokies."

Adam's eyes sparkle as he recalls meeting giant, Sudanese-born Majak Daw who recently made a spectacular senior debut. "I had to crane my neck to talk to him. It's great seeing the kids flock around him," he grins.

In rare spare moments, he enjoys reading Australian novelists Kirsten Tranter, Anna Funder and Richard Flanagan. "On planes, I now make myself put away the iPad and take a book."

Adam reveals he is a keen amateur DJ. "I was always fascinated how DJs make two records blend in a seamless stream of music. I bought a turntable and a few records and practised at home."

He then makes a surprising admission for a politician. "I can mix music, but I haven't got the patter down yet," he smiles.



Adam Bandt outside the Arts House

Photo: Jim Weatherill

Maurice Gaul is editor of the News

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Michael Harry, Good Food

LIFE IN YEAR 12

Militza Banach-Wightman

Year 12 hasn't killed me yet. Yes, I'm still alive!

Our year 12 common room is definitely the highlight of the year. In previous years we had to endure winter in arctic rooms, but now we sit in a heated room with couches and food at our disposal. I love wandering in the school grounds wearing my year 12 blue jumper and holding a plate of hot food as younger students look on enviously.

It truly highlights that I am in year 12. I must admit that some of the girls have gone so far as to emphasise their status by asking younger students: "What colour is my jumper?" When they nervously reply: "It's blue", they are then told: "That's right, it means I own you."

Special occasions bring copious amounts of food. Valentine's Day brought love heart-shaped cupcakes and Freddo frogs, but this was soon outdone by a birthday that brought a cake that could feed all 80 of us. Then the weeks leading up to Easter yielded 80 hand-made hot cross buns and chocolate.

However, the common room wouldn't be quite as nice without our weekly tin of Milo or the visits from the 'tea fairy' who kindly deposits bags full of T2 tea. That's right, not normal Twinings, but the expensive stuff. Finally, there's the bliss of spare periods, and sleeping during the day in the common

room has become the norm. This keeps us sane.

Strange things happen in year 12. Let me tell you about the purple finger incident. One of my friends arrived at school with a swollen finger that was definitely not the normal colour. In fact, it was purple. It seems she had woken at midnight to take her elastics out because they were hurting her teeth, left them in the bed and gone back to sleep.

Then at 2.00am she woke with a sore finger but, not too concerned, went back to sleep. But at five, she woke up, decidedly faint and unable to feel her finger. It was swollen, like a balloon! It turns out that she had put the elastic around her finger, cutting off her circulation, and it was still purplish when she arrived at school. Yes, year 12 is our most intellectually challenging year!

We're approaching the most expensive night of the year. Yes, it's the year 12 formal. It costs a fortune and our parents are expected to attend. But can you believe our school couldn't even manage to schedule it on a night when there wasn't another formal? Our brother school has their formal on the same evening! What a nuisance.

We have girls throwing cameras around as they discuss plans to video the big night. I've been asked to sing the *Skyfall* theme song. But, without question, it's the teachers who are the funniest.

Some girls asked our careers counsellor whom she took to the formal. She said she couldn't remember — then minutes later she came running up to say it was her boyfriend at the time. Then she proceeded to lecture us about why we shouldn't have boyfriends for our last year at school! It seems it's guaranteed to cause tears whenever you have a fight.

Militza Banach-Wightman writes regularly about her 2013 journey through year 12

Our film was *superbo*

Amanda Williams

On a beautiful, balmy Tuesday evening in late March, Cinema Nova rolled out the red carpet for four of North Melbourne Primary School's aspiring directors and actors.

Congratulations to Dario, Zara, Setia and Ruby for their outstanding effort in creating *La gara per Mangiamele* (The race for Mangiamele). The thrill of seeing our film shown on a huge screen in front of an audience of 300 people was exhilarating!

During term four last year, our students worked with five other primary and secondary schools to create a short film that recognised

the work and contribution of Giorgio Mangiamele to the Australian film industry.

Mangiamele was a pioneer of Australian cinema who emigrated to Australia in 1953. His films, made in the 1960s, won many awards with the Australian Film Institute, and his film *Clay* was the second Australian film chosen for the Cannes Film Festival.

Our film, created by the children at North Melbourne Primary, has now been invited to go into the collection of the Italian Historical Society, which collects, preserves and promotes the history of Italian immigration to Australia.

Amanda Williams is Italian coordinator at North Melbourne PS



Aspiring film directors are all smiles at a brain-storming session Photo: Amanda Williams

Camp was a blast even though it's our last

Milly Godbold

Camp is one of the best parts of school and for the grade 6s of North Melbourne Primary School, it was the last camp at primary school.

The camp we went to was called Coolamatong, near the Gippsland Lakes. The activities on offer were raft building, bushcraft, canoeing, bike riding, boat rides, farming and Survivor!

One of the best activities was the raft building where we had to build rafts out of six

plastic tubes and six wooden planks. We then launched the rafts into the river — some sank, some floated. Lucky we had really warm weather, so if you ended up in the water, it was OK.

Bushcraft was also fun. We got to make popcorn, pancakes and damper on an open fire. The bike riding was actually orienteering, where we had to find little posts with hole punchers on them and race other teams to win.

Farming was great too, as we got to milk a cow and actually got to drink milk straight from the udder!

We also had some downtime where we

could learn to ride a unicycle or play pool or table tennis, and there were also billy carts

I think Coolamatong should go down as absolutely the best camp ever!

Milly Godbold is in grade 6 at North Melbourne PS



This camp really swings Photo: Dian Moleta

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Art circles the Square Flicks for our chicks

Bart Sanciolo

Simonds College recently joined with other Catholic schools in a collective art and technology exhibition at the Yarra Gallery in Melbourne's Federation Square.

In this historic exhibition, the eleven participating schools presented samples of their students' art and technology work to celebrate and promote an understanding of the relevance of creativity in the curriculum.

The exhibition's launch was conducted by Paddy McKenna, executive officer of the Associated Catholic Colleges Association. It was attended by over 500 students, teachers, parents, representatives of the Catholic Education Office, principals and the Minister for Education, Martin Dixon.

Speeches by Mr Dixon and Fr Michael Twigg highlighted the importance of the promotion of spiritual, emotive and expressive values and the high relevance of arts and technology in the school curriculum and the wider society.

Both speakers emphasised the validity of art and technology as cultural components of our community, and the significance of creativity in the curriculum and society. They noted how art and technology contribute to social awareness and stressed the important role of art and design education in the development of the whole person.

Simonds College teachers Peter Murphy and Van Hoang coordinated the submission of their students' work in product design and visual communication. Many of the students



Matthew Crick and his proud mother

Photo: Bart Sanciolo

exhibited their first-class work while others welcomed guests to the auditorium and acted as ushers.

Our students' art and technology work displayed was impressive and revealed sensitivity, artistic talent, creativity and technical skill. It stood up admirably beside contributions from far larger schools and often more senior levels.

Simonds is proud of our students' involvement in the Federation Square exhibition.

Bart Sanciolo is coordinator of arts at Simonds Catholic College

Finella Oakley

North Melbourne Primary School held its "Movies in the Moonlight" fundraiser on a most perfect autumn Saturday evening in late April.

Around 300 parents and children rugged up and came ready with cushions, chairs and blankets to watch *Hotel Transylvania*. All money raised on the night will go towards the building of a chook shed to support our Kitchen Garden program.

The school was very pleased to have on board Hocking Stuart, North Melbourne,

as our major sponsor. Trevor Gange from Hocking Stuart attended a school assembly last month to present their sponsorship cheque of \$1960.

Also joining us on the Movies night was Rotary North Melbourne, who ably hosted the BBQ with their amazing pop-up BBQ plus an army of willing volunteers who raised \$340 for the chook shed.

Thanks to their generous sponsorship, the school was able to raise all up over \$2,500! We will soon have the best chook shed in town!

Finella Oakley is president of the school council at North Melbourne PS



Principal Sally Karlovic (left) with reps from Hocking Stuart and the SRC

Photo: Finella Oakley

We ran through Milan then roamed around Rome so now we can tell ya a tale of Italia

Jodie McLeod

An excited group of 20 St Aloysius College students from years 10 and 11 and three staff recently returned from a three-week trip to Italy.

Students attended classes at their sister school in Milan and spent time staying with host families. The trip aimed to allow students to experience Italian culture, visit local sites and enhance their understanding of the language and culture.

Year 11 student Julia Darcy summed up the experience when she said: "This was a trip I will never forget. I've learnt much more from

the sister school about life in Italy than I could have learned from a text book in class."

Students toured Venice, Milan, Florence and Rome, and took in the amazing sights and tourist destinations. A highlight of the time in Venice was the gondola ride with the singing gondolier.

In Milan the girls attended school at their sister school and spent 10 days in home-stays with Italian families. This provided them with an authentic experience as it immersed them in the Italian culture and lifestyle.

"We got to experience Italy as more than tourists as we lived the culture as real Italians would," said Renata Ulloa.

During the day the students attended classes

on topics such as the history of Italy and were treated to many cultural experiences with the local students. A visit to a Beethoven concert in Milan opera house La Scala, a da Vinci interactive exhibition and a day trip to Lago Maggiore ensured the girls experienced many facets of life in Milan.

"The exchange experience helped me improve my Italian and made me see a different side to Italy. Living with a family for 10 days was very exciting and interesting," said Daniella Campagna.

Teacher Rina Prinzi commented on the warm hospitality shown by the Milan school to the Australian visitors. "We received such a warm welcome on our arrival," she said.

"Friendships were developed and the partnership between the two schools was strengthened. We recognised that we each have a lot to offer the other."

St Aloysius takes a group of students to Italy every second year. On the alternate year, the Italian students visit our school.

The girls' three-week trip was filled with culture, history, fine Italian food and great hospitality. Teacher Lyn Gazal described the trip as a "cultural feast". It is an experience the girls and staff will never forget.

Jodie McLeod is marketing manager at St Aloysius College

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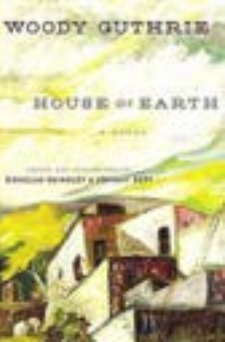
Buongiorno! Ten happy St Al's campers enjoying Italy

Photo: Courtesy St Aloysius

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Between the Covers

Chris Saliba



House of Earth
by Woody Guthrie
(Fourth Estate, RRP: \$22.99)

Woody Guthrie, the famous protest singer-songwriter, wrote songs about the hardships and injustices of the American Dust Bowl. In 1947, he completed his one and only novel, *House of Earth*. Guthrie's book never found a publisher and remained forgotten until its recent discovery.

The blurb on the dust jacket describes *House of Earth* as a mix between John Steinbeck and D. H. Lawrence, and with this it's hard to disagree.

There is an earthy mix of sex, nature, land and reproduction, which is coupled with social realism, politics and the harshness of the Depression.

The personal and the political are tightly bound in this intensely intimate tale of a couple struggling against harsh natural conditions and a deeply exploitative economic system.

House of Earth gives an intimate view into the world of those who struggled as farmers and workers in the Dust Bowl during the Depression era. Not only of their outward circumstances but also their inner thoughts, hopes and dreams.



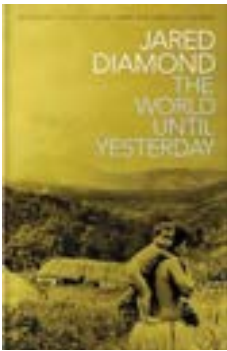
High Sobriety: My Life Without Booze
by Jill Stark
(Scribe Publications, RRP: \$29.95)

Jill Stark moved from her home of Scotland to Australia a decade ago, got her dream job as health reporter for the *Age* and won awards for her reporting on binge drinking.

The irony was that some of this award-winning journalism was written with an almighty hangover. For twenty years, Stark confesses, she had been a binge drinker herself, weekend benders being a normal part of her life.

What makes *High Sobriety* such a brilliant success is the confessional nature of the book. Stark is completely candid about her problems with drink and the negative health impacts it has had on her. This approach ensures the book is never preachy.

This is someone who knew all the risks better than anyone but thought they didn't apply to her. By telling her own story, 35-year-old Stark manages to tell a lot of the nation's story of alcohol abuse.

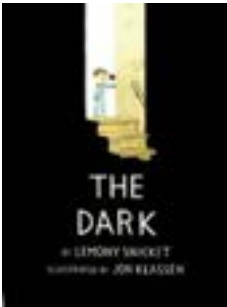


The World Until Yesterday
by Jared Diamond
(Allen Lane, RRP: \$29.99)

The World Until Yesterday asks what positives can we learn from traditional societies that can be incorporated into our modern Western lifestyles. The book isn't overly prescriptive on this front. Rather, it offers a thoughtful study and contrast of human evolution from the traditional to the modern, from hunter-gatherers to the nation state.

What sort of picture does Diamond paint of traditional life? On the whole, I must admit, not a particularly attractive one. In many instances his description of traditional life is quite Hobbesian: nasty, brutish and short. Warfare in traditional societies in chronic, everyday life is full of life-threatening risks, disease can easily fell its victims, and sometimes euthanasia of the old is necessitated by the scarcity of resources.

The World Until Yesterday shows how fragile life has been for many people for thousands of years. This is a book of reality, describing life when it is lived close to nature without a protective central government and surplus food production.



The Dark
by Lemony Snicket and Jon Klassen
(Orchard, RRP: \$24.99)

Young Lazlo lives in a big, sparse house with lots of stairways and big rooms. There's also a basement where the dark lives. At night, the dark spreads throughout the rest of the house, and in the morning it retreats back into the basement. Lazlo is scared of the dark.

One night the dark starts speaking to Lazlo. He beckons him into the basement then leads him to a dresser and asks him to open the bottom drawer. When Lazlo does so, he discovers something that will help him with his fear.

Jon Klassen's moody and evocative drawings work perfectly with Lemony Snicket's suspenseful yet ultimately comforting story about coping with the uneasy feeling that the night can bring on.

This new picture book, perfect for readers from three to six, is the first time Klassen and Snicket have collaborated together, and the results are delightful and charming.

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

Distance connects us all in ways unseen

Ava McMaster

"I'm not very good at resting," Nicola McClelland tells me.

I can well believe it. Her life as an artist has consisted of travelling the world, living in many different countries, all the while following her artist's pathway and teaching English.

Whilst she has always had an interest in people's stories, like the many migrants she has taught English to, Nicola's artwork tells her own life story.

When Nicola was a child, her mother constantly referred to her homeland of England. "This caused me to feel like I had grown up in Australia, but there were these other places that were part of me," she says. The artwork of her most recent exhibition reflects this.

That solo exhibition, "That Great Distance that Separates", was on display at Purgatory Artworks in North Melbourne in April. It clearly tapped into her own life story, most obviously through her inclusion of maps.

"These art pieces were more personal than my previous exhibitions," she says. She explains that they were instigated by a recent trip she took with her mother.

They travelled to their ancestral village in Germany where Nicola's great grandparents came from. "I went there expecting to find

my roots," she says. However, she discovered something quite different. "There is no origin, there is no real return."

Nicola describes her history, one similar to that of many Australians, as threaded "from all over". In comparison to this, there was a sense of complexity to the history of her newly acquainted German relatives. "One of them, who was in her eighties, had this sense that she had lived there forever," she says. It revealed a divide between them. "It was like the old world and the new."

However, it was not all about divide. As Nicola enthusiastically describes this meeting with her relatives, in particular how she had to draw on her "very old, very rusty" German, something of a coincidence emerges. The artwork of one of the younger relatives, who wasn't even present, was shown, and it revealed themes much like Nicola's own artwork. "Snap!" cries Nicola. "Isn't that amazing? Isn't that just the strangest thing?"

She talks me through the way she works artistically, using piles of atlases, old history books and recycled materials. As she speaks, she explains how at first she used the maps of places she knew. "But, after a while, I became more interested in the sea," she says.

The sea connects all land. Thus, it is not all about divide.

Ava McMaster is arts and entertainment editor for the News



Nicola McClelland displays her free-flowing artistic creations

Photo: Jim Weatherill

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All the Angels aflutter as they wing off to sing

Liz Dohrmann

Why has Errol's Angels Community Choir practice been so lively on recent Thursday evenings?

Easy! Because we've been invited to sing at the Light in Winter in Federation Square! The choir will be singing in the square on Thursday 20 June. We will be positioned under the Helix Tree, which will be in the very centre of the square.

The Angels will be the spotlight from 5.30pm to 6.00pm, and we'll be showcasing our own repertoire while bringing a new anthem by Lou Bennett of the Indigenous Black Arm Band to life.

The choir will then sing en masse with many other Melbourne choirs in a grand spectacular for the public, at the solstice celebration on Saturday 22 June from 5.00pm to 8.00pm. Come along and see (and hear) for yourself how much fun singing can be!

We all get focused when we have an upcoming public performance. As a result, we've got down to serious rehearsal of some new work and returned to some of our old favourites. We almost nailed one of the new works in just

two or three sessions, and we all had a warm feeling of achievement after hearing the lovely harmonies we were creating.

Knowing we can produce a beautiful sound will travel with us as we prepare for our performances as part of The Light in Winter festival in Fed Square. We are one of 20 cultural groups that have been invited to perform, along with international artists and designers, in the square, one of the most visited and high-profile locations in Melbourne.

Now in its seventh consecutive year, The Light in Winter, directed by master of the arts Robyn Archer, has a long tradition of bringing together an engaging program of art, sculpture, events and the much-loved solstice celebration, held annually on the Saturday closest to the true winter solstice, the shortest day of the year.

This year, the power of the voice and the helix as the symbol of life resonate through the program. There will be offerings from Melbourne's Indigenous and multicultural communities, forums about science and democracy, and a new project exploring the common voice of diverse groups. Performers will take their lead from the presence of renowned light artist Bruce Ramus' work Helix Tree.

The Helix Tree will be in the centre of the



Not a harp to be seen in a coffee break for the Angels

Photo: Mark McPherson

square. A huge steel and light structure representing life itself, it will be activated each night at dusk by the voices of Melbourne.

This new Australian work will be equipped with advanced sound and light technology that responds to the voices of those who sing to its network of spirals and curves. A succession of community choirs (that's us!) will assemble at its base each night during June and sing

— bringing the tree to life with our voices.

If you enjoy singing, come and join us on Thursday evenings between 7.00pm and 9.00pm during school terms at 505 Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne. You can call Kath on 0408 564 213 or visit our website www.errol-sangels.com.

Liz Dohrmann is a member of Errol's Angels

SPORT & HEALTH

Young Propulsion swimmers make a splash

Sarah Harkin

You can't see the bobble of coloured silicone caps from outside of the University of Melbourne swimming pool at 6.15am.

The steam is rising from the pool like a wet racehorse on a cold morning, leaving a layer of chlorinated fog on the windows. I'm late, and I miss the early opening of the doors. Pounding on the cold glass, I don't even know if anyone is inside.

Propulsion Aquatic Swimming Club's head coach, Sebastian Bettiol, opens a side door to let me in, smile beaming even at this hour.

"You're late," he muses, hand outstretched. I shake it.

He looks far too young to be a coach, let alone one with three swimmers who have just returned from a successful Australian age championships in Adelaide in March. He is quick to deflect my compliments, and introduces me to Propulsion Aquatic's young prodigies — Ella Keogh, Liam Martin and Gerard Hawkins — all students at Uni High.

The trio don't stop swimming for long. Sebastian is quick to tell them to keep going. They have a set to finish.

I watch the squad for the next twenty minutes as Sebastian points out the strengths and weaknesses behind their stroke mechanics.

"Ella's main stroke is backstroke," he says. "She qualified for the 100m and 200m backstroke at the Adelaide championships, but swam slightly off her personal best times."

"I moved up a few rankings in the 200 but down a few in the 100," 15-year-old Ella says between laps. "I was disappointed in the times but I was proud that I was able to keep my nerve and race as well as I could."

Nerves have been somewhat of a problem for Ella throughout recent seasons, which she puts down to her mindset before a race.

"I would get so nervous that I let myself become anxious, stressed and slow," she says. However, visualisation techniques have helped the North Melbourne teenager to use her nerves to her advantage, rather than letting them overwhelm her.

Also a North Melbourne local, 15-year-old Gerard qualified for the 100m and 200m breaststroke, and it was his swim in the 200 that Sebastian seemed most impressed with.

"He swam a personal best of 2.36.43 and managed to lift twelve spots to finish in the top twenty in his age group at his first national championships," Sebastian says. This made Gerard the first Propulsion Aquatic swimmer to do so. "He is an amazing competitor, and the outstanding result is a real testament to his determination and unwavering self-belief."

"It was the biggest event I've ever swum in, so expectations were high," Gerard says. "I was happy with my 200 swim because I was able to swim a two-second personal best. Now I know that all the hours I have spent in the pool and Seb's persistence have paid off."

Fifteen-year-old Liam qualified for the 50m backstroke and moved up five rankings after swimming a time of 25.71.

"The fact that all three swimmers were able to lift their national ranking in at least one event was a fantastic effort," Sebastian says.

The squad is now preparing for the short-course winter season.



Coach Sebastian Bettiol (second from left) with Gerard, Liam and Ella Photo: Jaime Berrill

Sarah Harkin is sport and health editor for the News. She is on the committee at Propulsion Aquatic Swimming Club

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HISTORY

Local hall takes us on walk through our past

Bill Hannan

One of the first history walks conducted by the Hotham History Project was a pub walk. It seemed right, therefore, that the Project should organise a temperance walk.

The temperance movement had, after all, played a part in closing down the many pubs (116 in North and West Melbourne) that were only a memory by the time of the pub walk. But there was much more to the temperance movement of the nineteenth century than opposition to the drink. In several ways, temperance was the focus of political reform in Victoria.

To the leaders of the temperance movement, temperance and total abstinence (from alcohol) were the same thing. This is true at least for two of its formative leaders, Richard Heales (1821-1864) and James Munro (1832-1908), who were leaders of both temperance and total abstinence societies. Both men were also premiers of the colony and generally associated with radical policies, Heales it seems for genuinely idealistic reasons, Munro for rather more expedient ones.

Heales is indirectly associated with North Melbourne through his dealings with the politicians William Haines and John O'Shanassy who are remembered in the names of a couple of streets that cross Abbotsford Street. Munro's association is closer. In 1874 he became liberal member for North Melbourne in the Legislative Assembly. In the same year Hotham's Temperance Hall at 456 Queensberry Street was built and provided a shelter for Munro's campaign against the publican John Curtain.

A publican, of course, had little need then for public halls to campaign in. The 1870s were still the days of all-male suffrage and pubs were still the setting for much political activity. Richard Heales, who had helped form the Total Abstinence Society and build Melbourne's Temperance Hall in 1847, suc-

ceeded as a Melbourne City councillor in having council elections, conducted by a show of hands, moved out of pubs.

He hoped the time was near when "the nomination and the poll would no longer be the arena of vice and intemperance, but when the election of the candidate would be the pure result of the people's choice" (*Australian Dictionary of Biography*). He supported secret ballots and, along with his temperance causes, gained a reputation as a democrat and advocate for the improvement of the working classes. When he stood (unsuccessfully) in 1856 for the seat of Melbourne he campaigned as a champion of working men and for a general system of education.



James Munro Image: Aust. Dict. Biography

Thus when James Munro campaigned as a temperance man in 1874 he was already part of a reformist tradition from which the cause of female suffrage followed naturally. Munro's biographer suggests that his motives were not altogether idealistic since many women were inclined to the temperance cause, sometimes no doubt for practical domestic reasons but also out of the same sense of justice that animated men such as Heales.

So with this background in mind we started the Hotham temperance walk at the 1877 Thomas Henderson fountain outside the post office in Errol Street, without alluding to the

role clean water would play in Western drinking habits, and paused briefly in front of the bluestone pile that used to be the Lalla Rookh Hotel where, like Thomas Henderson, I sang a song but, unlike him, did not recite Tennyson.

We then moved near the corner of Chetwynd Street, to a view of the Temperance Hall, built in 1874 by the Hotham Temperance Hall Company that was formed on 8 January 1874 by five North Melbourne tradesmen headed by William Riddell, a tailor. The building of the hall seems improbably quick, what with the land being bought by Riddell from Andrew Knight on 4 March and an election meeting addressed by Munro in the new hall reported in the *North Melbourne Advertiser* of 27 March.

The speed might be explained by the fact that the hall was built in two stages — the hall first, then the shops in front. It is clear from another report in the same *Advertiser* that the street in front of the hall and the space between it and William Riddell's dwelling were not part of the hall as it eventually became.

The temperance movement, notably in the person of businessman James Munro, was closely connected to friendly societies (with exotic names) and coffee palaces. The walk stopped opposite the car park that used to be North Melbourne's coffee palace and we speculated awhile on whether these institutions were effective social substitutes for pubs, though no doubt necessary in the absence of measures to civilise pubs. Friendly societies in Hotham were numerous enough to take over the Temperance Hall in 1883 and keep it until evangelical Christians bought it in 1909.

Back at the Temperance Hall, the walk was



Richard Heales Image: Aust. Dict. Biography

highly entertained by Bill Liddy and Ken Mansell recounting stories of the hall when it was the headquarters of the Communists' Eureka Youth League and a leading venue of hot jazz. Unresolved disputes about when and how various socialist and free speech movements came to use the hall — there are long-standing local stories without documentation — were able to be carried on over a charming afternoon tea provided by the hall's present owners, the Legion of Mary.

There is much still to be known about the Temperance Hall and the movement that created it.

On Richard Heales, see Margot Beever in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 4, (MUP), 1972.

On James Munro, see Anne M. Mitchell in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 5, (MUP), 1974.

Bill Hannan is a member of the Hotham

Fight night

David Hewitt

Veteran local readers might recall the *Argus*, the venerable daily Melbourne newspaper that ceased publication in 1957.

In May 1941 it ran a story on boxer 'Young Llew' Edwards who had been born in North Melbourne in 1912 as Michael White. He commenced fighting at 16 under an adopted ring-name inspired by Llew Edwards, featherweight champion of England and Lonsdale Belt holder, who came to Australia in 1917.

Young Llew also went on to be a national champion and achieved fame as the undefeated



featherweight champion of Australia. He went on to win the advertised fight at the West Melbourne Stadium against English featherweight champion Nel Tarleton in 1933.

The image is an advertising postcard for the event. Young Llew, a brilliant boxer and ring tactician, retained his skills and fought up to the time of World War 2.

David Hewitt lives in North Melbourne

Zero truth

Maurice Gaul

Have you heard about the Japanese plane that landed in a North Melbourne street during the darkest days of World War 2?

Well, the *Herald Sun*'s folksy 'In Black and White' column recently aired this wonderful urban myth. A reader, Walter, 76, says he was six when the war came to North Melbourne in 1943.

He breathlessly recounts how his family were out on the street at 1.00am. "We were near the corner of Victoria and Howard when this small plane landed and taxied towards St Mary Star of the Sea.

"Someone dressed in black ran out from a laneway and handed the pilot something. The



Drawing: Ava MacMaster

plane turned, went under the tram wires in Victoria Street and took off. It didn't have any markings, but we assumed it was Japanese.

"We never heard any more about it." Funny about that!

Maurice Gaul is editor of the News

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