

LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges NO. 64 SEPTEMBER 2018



- Zane's rocking role
- Celebrating 40 years of local theatre
- The power of small kindnesses

11,500 free copies distributed throughout Mooroolbark and district



A Twist in the Tale

Have you ever wanted to be a lion tamer? Perhaps even a lion *tail twister*? As strange as it may seem, Tail Twister is the real name for a position in Mooroolbark. While the role is currently occupied, if you play your cards right you may one day get the chance to be an official lion tail twister!

All you have to do to be in the running for the position of Tail Twister is to be a member of the Lions Club of Mooroolbark. Along with the usual offices of president, vice president, and treasurer, the Lions also have the intriguingly named roles of Lion Tamer and Tail Twister. Incumbent Tail Twister Barry Evans explained that the duties of the Tail Twister include providing harmony and entertainment during the meetings. “I introduce some humour and impose fines on people in a humorous way,” said Barry. “It suits me because I like to have a bit of fun.”

Despite a sometimes light-hearted approach, some very serious work is being done by quite a small band of Lions in Mooroolbark.

The Mooroolbark chapter of Lions Clubs International will celebrate its 50-year anniversary in November. Since being chartered in 1968, the club has contributed to our community in a remarkable way for its small size, donating more than \$1.5 million toward improving the lives of people in the community.

Despite the Lions worldwide reputation and the fact that many people are familiar with its name and distinctive logo, many people aren’t aware of most of the club’s activities and achievements. Peter Giddings, Mooroolbark club’s immediate past president and longest-serving member, said, “People tend to look at us and wonder what we do. We’ve had people ask whether we are part of the Brisbane Lions football club!”

“Lions is the biggest international service organisation in the world,” explained Mooroolbark Lions President George Nantes. “It’s got more than 1.4 million members and has clubs in more than 200 countries—so it’s a big organisation.”

The Lions motto is “We Serve.” It would be an easy mistake to think that “serving” refers to sausages. In fact, the Lions *do* serve sausages—their sausages sizzles are some of the best in Australia. However, more importantly, the Lions serve people and communities. Here in Mooroolbark, you don’t have to look far to see examples of that service.

Many public facilities in Mooroolbark were built or funded by the Lions—playgrounds and barbecue areas, parks, gardens, and the well-known Hookey Park rotunda. In 1993 the Lions provided half of the \$50,000 needed to construct the rotunda, with the Shire of Lilydale contributing the other half. Lions also help support sporting clubs, youth groups, cultural programs, and community groups such as the Mooroolbark History Group, Men’s Shed and Mooroolbark Theatre Group.

Mooroolbark Lions Club also provides practical and financial help to local organisations like schools, nursing homes, and other facilities for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. The club has also donated extensively in the last 50 years to medical research, health and welfare programs, disaster relief and humanitarian causes, both local and worldwide. It has provided educational scholarships, and funding to draw attention to issues like bullying, youth suicide, mental illness, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Every year the Lions contribute—both financially and in manpower—to community events such as Celebrate Mooroolbark and the annual tree-planting event. The club is a major organiser and financier of Carols by Candlelight, the Anzac Day memorial service, and this year, the commemoration of 100 years of Armistice.

Over more than 40 years, Mooroolbark Lions has contributed almost \$68,000 toward sending hundreds of primary-school aged children to Lions-sponsored camps at Licola, a quiet town on the banks of the Macalister River in West Gippsland. The township of Licola is owned by the Lions clubs of Victoria and southern NSW, and is the only privately-owned town in Victoria. Most of

Mooroolbark Lions pay for several children each year to enjoy an adventurous and challenging camp at Licola Wilderness Village

PHOTO: CHERRY WAKE

lions australia

we serve



the township is occupied by the Licola Wilderness Village, which operates camps for deserving and disadvantaged children. "It's for children who wouldn't normally get a holiday—single-parent families and so on," said George. The camp's primary purpose is to provide campers with a positive experience of nature and the outdoors. At Licola, the children participate in raft-building, a high-ropes course, canoeing, flying fox, slip-n-slide, and other activities that are fun, challenging, and promote team building.

In all, the Mooroolbark Lions contribute around \$50,000 every year to make Mooroolbark and the rest of the world a better place.

Finding money for its projects is one of the club's biggest priorities. The primary source of income is the sale of pre-loved items at the Lions Club Op Shop in Manchester Road. Each year, profits of approximately \$50,000 are drawn from the op shop. Thanks to the generous donations of goods by local residents, the shop is able to maintain a year-round supply of good-quality items for sale. In addition to providing funding for the Lions community projects, the shop provides a range of affordable clothing, household items and furniture for those on low incomes.

Funds raised by the op shop are supplemented by donations and sales of items such as fruit cakes, and the famous Lions sausages. All of the



The Lions' famous sausage sizzles are a local favourite and raise much-needed funds for service

money donated by the public through fundraising is given directly to the project for which the funds were raised.

The tale of the Lions' service and commitment to the local community is inspiring. Unfortunately, though, there's a twist—a bit of a wrinkle—in the tale. The twist is that the Lions club, a small but powerful group for so long, is concerned that without an increase in membership, its 50 years of serving the Mooroolbark community will come to an end. The

current members have increasing demands on their time, and as George put it, "We're all getting older—some might say decrepit!"

It's a critical situation for the Mooroolbark community. "Unless we get more members," said George, "we're just not in a position to continue." Peter added, "If we can no longer continue, a lot of community support will disappear. The fire brigade and the SES alone have been supported by us to the tune of nearly \$60,000 each since we began."



To celebrate its 25th anniversary in 1993, Mooroolbark Lions Club donated the Hookey Park rotunda to the community.

The Lions would love for more people over 18—male and female, old and young—to join them in community service and the social life of the club. As well as the obvious benefit to the community, there's a lot to be gained for those who become Lions. "There's fellowship and a sense of achievement," said Peter. "There's also potential for personal development if you have a leadership role or if you're working with people who have experience in different fields who can give you some guidance."

"Service organisations have an appeal because they meet a need for people," Peter continued. Barry agreed: "We're a great little group—we have a lot of fun together. There's a lot of social contact, and we get immense satisfaction out of helping the community. A lot of people agree that doing voluntary work is more satisfying than doing paid work."

As the club's website says, "Today the Lions of Mooroolbark Club is small in numbers, but strong in community spirit." Unfortunately, seeing a Lion in Mooroolbark these days is almost like seeing a rare, endangered animal. But if you happen to be in the street on the right day, when the light is right and your eyes are sharp, you may see Lion Barry Evans heading to the bank, bearing a deposit slip marked "Tail Twister".

For the sake of our community, let's not let these remarkable creatures become extinct—help us save the Lions!

Janet Van Dijk

If you're interested in joining the Lions to help improve life for the residents of Mooroolbark, or can volunteer a few hours a week to help out in the op shop, please contact the Lions Club for details:

Rocco Mammoliti: 0419-357-306

George Nantes: 0432-953-827

Email: mooroolbark.lions@gmail.com

Website: mooroolbark.vic.lions.org.au

Centenary of Armistice Celebration

11 November, Hookey Park
11:00 am

This November, Australians will commemorate the centenary of the armistice that ended the first World War. On Sunday 11 November, the Lions Club—in conjunction with Mooroolbark History Group and the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group—will be hosting an Armistice Day celebration in Hookey Park.

After a short service there will be the dedication of the fourth plaque on the war memorial plinths. Joining the plaques of Courage, Mateship, and Sacrifice will be the final plaque of Service, honouring those who served our country in times of war.

The ceremony will be followed by a free concert including music by the Croydon Brass Band, and combined school choir. After the concert, people are welcome to enjoy the free sausage sizzle, or bring their own picnics. The event is expected to conclude at about 1:30 pm.

All Welcome

celebrate mooroolbark Inc.



Dare to Dream

September is here already and the next Celebrate Mooroolbark festival is in March, so there are only six months to prepare for our 2019 festival!

We've achieved a lot in the last year and have great plans for future festivals. We couldn't do this without our valued volunteers, and I'd like to



Mary Bourchier

acknowledge the work of one in particular, who has been on the committee for many years. Mary Bourchier is the only remaining original committee member since the first festival in 2003. Her role has been to coordinate the school competitions, as well as to encourage local traders to give away free vouchers or products from their shop for the Lucky Straws stall. It is not an easy task as the schools are scattered, but with diligence and calmness, Mary gets the job done—so thank you, Mary, for your consistent contribution over the years.

Each year Celebrate Mooroolbark Inc strives to become more environmentally sustainable, and we now have our own "War Against Waste" officer on the committee. This year we had a balloon-free festival and also used paper straws for the Lucky Straws stall instead of plastic. We hope to encourage our stallholders in 2019 to share our vision.

In 2018 we introduced some new ideas—more entertainment for older children, the extension of the parade up to Manchester Road, and tendering our rides. We have some great ideas for next year, too! We hope to have a children's stage in addition to the main stage and the youth stage, and we want to extend the parade into Manchester Road. We will also encourage our diverse cultural community to have stalls to educate the public about their nutrition, crafts and way of life.

Our theme this year is "Dare to Dream", and we are focusing on local groups and individuals who inspire us and contribute to the Mooroolbark community. Inspiration is not hard to find in our community—it could be a warm and friendly shop owner, or a business that is concerned for the wellbeing of the community and the environment. It may be a teacher or mentor who motivates us, or just someone others are proud to know and admire. It is anyone who is following their dreams or helping you to follow yours!

We thank the Yarra Ranges Council, the local traders and our other generous and loyal sponsors who support our festival each year. In order for the festival to continue to grow, we would love to welcome more sponsors and supporters. Several of our volunteer roles have also opened up as people have moved on, so we are looking for some new recruits! If you are interested in helping out as either as a sponsor or a volunteer, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Barbara on 0417 381 542, via the Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival Facebook page, or email barbara@celebratemooroolbark.com.

Barbara Austin
Chair, Celebrate Mooroolbark Committee



John Lowry and Peter Gray outside the new Men's Shed facility

Mooroolbark Men's Shed

Speaking on behalf of the Men's Shed membership, John Lowry (president) and Peter Gray (vice president) excitedly referred to their new facilities and the potential for its future development as "a dream come true". The Manchester Heights Tennis Club facilities became available to the Men's Shed group after the club's recent amalgamation with Mooroolbark Tennis Club.

The existing clubrooms provide a perfect setting for the social aspects of the Men's Shed operation and leave the recent \$60,000 grant from the Department of Human Services free to be fully used for the development of the planned workshop area. The council permit for the construction of a 22m x 10m shed on one of the old tennis court sites is now in place. Included in the overall plan is the placement of two shipping containers alongside the shed for the storage of materials and equipment. It is anticipated that the facility will be in full use by the end of the year.

Over the past months the club members have been very active in adding to the accumulated funds through bi-monthly sausage sizzles, raffles, and the sale of items produced by the men in their temporary premises. These items include possum boxes, bird feeders, nesting boxes, children's toys and garden trugs (shallow rectangular gardening baskets).

The group is most appreciative of the sponsorship support received from the Bendigo Bank, Mooroolbark Lions, the Professionals and Bunnings, as well as the very generous donations of raffle prizes from many local businesses. They are also thankful to the many members of the local community who have donated machinery, tools and other equipment—currently estimated to be close to \$20,000 in value. John said, "The generous, unsolicited response from the broader community has been absolutely amazing. The whole concept has been strongly embraced."

Peter noted that the club already has 24 members and added, "From the number of enquiries we are receiving, there is little doubt that our membership will grow significantly once the facilities are in full operation—testament to the significant value of the Men's Shed concept for the general health and wellbeing of older men."

The club's longer-term vision is that this valuable facility in its delightful bush setting will become another community hub in our neighbourhood, serving many different groups and individuals. Many thanks and congratulations to all involved in getting this initiative up and running. We look forward to seeing the planned developments come to fruition in the very near future.

Doug Lewis

If you would like to obtain more information about the operation of the Mooroolbark Men's Shed or would like to arrange to donate machinery, equipment or materials, please contact John Lowry on 0419 366 939 or on the Mooroolbark Men's Shed Facebook page.

Zane Rocks On

School of Rock, a new family musical set to open in Melbourne, has been eagerly anticipated by those who have seen the movie and heard about the show's success on New York's Broadway and in London's West End. One Mooroolbark boy, though, is more excited than most about *School of Rock* coming to Melbourne.

Zane Blumeris has a special reason to be excited—he's one of the stars of the show, taking on his first commercial stage role at just eleven years old!

School of Rock: The Musical is an Andrew Lloyd Webber production, based on the hit movie of the same name. The musical follows the story of Dewey, a struggling aspiring rock star. Thanks to a case of mistaken identity, when Dewey has trouble meeting his living expenses, he is able to earn money by taking on the guise of a substitute teacher at a prestigious private school. While there, he notices the musical talents of his grade five students and sees an opportunity to pay his rent by winning an upcoming Battle of the Bands contest. He forms a band with his students and enters them into the contest, unknown to their parents and the school—all while trying to hide his own identity. Predictably, not everything goes as planned.

Andrew Lloyd Webber and his wife Madeleine were inspired to turn the story into a musical after watching the movie with their family and feeling enthusiastic about the underlying message that music can change a person's life. They also loved the story's theme of "outrageous fun."

Zane is one of 36 children aged nine to 13 years of age who landed a role in the musical after a talent search across Australia. *School of Rock* has 12 student parts, with three children alternating in each role for different performances of the show. Zane plays one of the four main children's roles—the part of Zach, the group's electric guitarist.

At eleven, Zane is articulate and quietly confident—it's not hard to see how he won over the directors during the audition process. His role involves a fusion of several talents—as well as performing as a solo guitarist, he will have to act and sing. Zane is modest about his singing abilities. "I can sing, but I don't think that is my strongest point," he said. "I think guitar is the reason why they chose me." He has been playing guitar for about two and a half years and is mostly self-taught. He also studied acting for a couple of years at

the Victorian Youth Theatre in Croydon, where he took part in number of shows. Last year, Zane was cast in his biggest role to date, the starring role of Troy in Rolling Hills Primary School's production of *High School Musical*.

Zane said he's "extremely excited" about the opening of *School of Rock*, which starts on 31 October in Melbourne. "It's going to be a really good experience." He also admitted to being very nervous about the first few performances, saying, "I've never done anything as big as this... I've never performed in front of audiences as big as at Her Majesty's Theatre."

The show's emphasis on the importance of teaching through music was a drawcard for Zane. He said, "I've always loved rock bands and guitar has always been something that I've been interested in." Zane also likes the fact that the character of Dewey teaches the children to push themselves beyond their boundaries.

Once rehearsals start on 10 September, Zane will be practicing long hours and won't be able to attend school regularly. Instead, *School of Rock* tutors will help the cast members with their studies. Zane's school friends are pleased about his starring role, and Zane is looking forward to attending the important end-of-year functions with them to mark his final days of primary school.

Zane's family has also been very excited about his upcoming role. His siblings—sister Alaska, 16, and brother Jett, 14—have been very supportive. "They're so excited for him," said their mother Danielle. "Jett went to most of the auditions, just for moral support. They can't wait for it all to happen for him." Craig and Danielle Blumeris are also both very enthusiastic about their son's part in the musical, if a little overwhelmed. "Getting to this point has been crazy," said Danielle. "But the role was just so perfect for him, being guitar and acting. We've got a big family and they're all so excited and can't wait to buy tickets."

Zane is too young to be sure of where his future career lies, but he's interested in acting—and, of course, music! Whatever his plans might be, Zane's family is behind him. Danielle said, "We're all supporting him with whatever he wants to do with it."

No doubt we will be hearing more from this talented young Mooroolbark local. Stay tuned!

Janet Van Dijk

Our front cover shows Zane giving the iconic "rock on" hand signal during publicity for the musical. Photo: Jim Lee.



A Taste of Harmony

Locals who enjoy Asian dishes will be pleased to know that a new takeaway restaurant has opened in Mooroolbark. Harmony Asian Cuisine opened its doors in July and is excited to welcome new customers. The bright, modern interior offers plenty of tables for those who want to relax and enjoy a meal.

The restaurant was opened by Jimmy and Cherry Chen, who both come from Guangzhou (Canton) in China, a large port city on the Pearl River, northwest of Hong Kong. They met in China but came to Australia separately—Jimmy about 18 years ago and Cherry about 14 years ago—before they were married. Jimmy has nearly 30 years' experience as a chef. He was employed in a large restaurant in China before coming to Australia, where he has worked in several



Chef Jimmy Chen

restaurants over the last 20 years.

The Chens recently moved to Ringwood, where their two daughters attend school. Now that their daughters are getting older, the Chens have decided to start their first business. They chose Mooroolbark as the location for Harmony Asian Cuisine because it was close to home and school. They have been welcomed by locals and are very thankful for the support and kindness they have received from the other shops and cafés in Mooroolbark.

Serena Chen is 13 and her sister Samantha will soon be ten. Both the Chen daughters are interested in music and are involved in the Melbourne Youth Orchestras program. "My older one plays oboe and my younger one plays cello," said Cherry. In addition, both girls play piano. Serena and Samantha have proven to be assets to their parents' business. Serena sometimes helps her parents with paperwork, assisting with their English. And Samantha, according to Cherry, is "really good for promotion." Cherry said, "She brings a lunch box from our business—dumplings, some rice—to school, and then she will show some classmates and they think it's so yummy. So then her friends or the teachers will ask for the menu."

Jimmy Chen prepares a variety of foods including dumplings and fried noodles, and the business also employs a chef from Malaysia. Although the existing menu is



The freshly prepared laksa is a favourite with friends and customers

already large, they hope to expand it further once they have become more established. At the moment they are concentrating on traditional Asian foods, and will later add other items that are popular in the Chens' home province of Guangzhou. "In Beijing they eat very spicy food, but in Guangzhou the food is not that spicy," said Cherry.

If you're looking for some genuine Asian food right in the heart of Mooroolbark, stop in at the Chen's restaurant, where you will find food to warm your tummy and a welcome to warm your heart.

Janet Van Dijk

Harmony Asian Cuisine is located at 52 Manchester Road, Mooroolbark, and is open for lunch from 11 am till 3 pm every day except Tuesdays and Sundays. Dinner is available between 5 and 9 pm on Mondays and from Wednesday to Sunday. Takeaway orders are welcome on 9733 4816.

Running for a Cause

On 13 September, suicide prevention will be in the minds of many Australians as they take part in R U OK? Day, a time which seeks to help everyone understand the part we can all play in reaching out to those who may need emotional support. R U OK? is just one of several Australian organisations which understand the importance of bringing attention and funds to the subject of suicide. It was with this goal in mind that in May, Anytime Fitness in Lilydale held a 24-hour treadmill challenge to raise funds for Suicide Prevention Australia.

Anytime Fitness has more than 480 gyms around Australia. Three of those locations—Lilydale, Ringwood and Ringwood North—undertook the challenge together, and between them raised approximately \$4000.

The fundraiser ran from 3 pm until 3 pm and was divided into half-hour shifts, with each participant paying \$10 to enter. Gym members took turns walking or running on the treadmill, keeping it going for 24 hours.

Bree Pike, manager of the Lilydale gym, was impressed with the level of commitment. "One of our members came in and did a total of two hours on the treadmill, which was totally unexpected," she said. "He then came back later on in the day, just to be supportive of others who were walking as well."

Local businesses also helped by contributing goods and services for a raffle, which raised almost \$300. "I was so happy at the generosity of so many small businesses," said Bree. Those club members who didn't take part in the treadmill challenge lent their support by entering the raffle or donating money.

Some of the club members revealed during the challenge that suicide had touched their lives, which provided the gym an opportunity to learn more about some of their members. The club put up pictures of loved ones who had been lost to suicide, giving added meaning to the reason for the challenge.



Although the Lilydale gym has supported other causes, this was the first time it has held a fundraiser for suicide, and there are plans to do it again. "It was an inspiration to see members walking for their family and friends," said Bree. Suicide can affect anyone at any time, and members of the gym were proud to help create awareness by participating on behalf of their loved ones.

Janet Van Dijk

Anytime Fitness is located at 317-319 Main St, Lilydale and is open 24 hours. For more information, phone 9737 6614.



40th Anniversary

How did a student from Paisley Grammar School in the south of Scotland become the founder of a Mooroolbark theatre group which is soon to celebrate forty years of live entertainment?

Arline Myers is originally from Scotland and is the mother of two boys, who in 1978 were attending Mooroolbark High School, which is now Mooroolbark College. At the time Arline was the president of the school council, and when principal Jack Everson wanted to encourage interaction between students and parents, Arline suggested a theatre group involving both parents and their teenagers. The suggestion was accepted and twenty or more people became the embryo of Mooroolbark Theatre Group (MTG), as it is known today.

The group's first show was a revue called *Carry on Mooroolbark*, created by its cast of around thirty five people, only two of whom had any previous stage experience. Arline herself had very little experience, but from the time she was two years old her parents, especially her mother, would take her to Glasgow in Scotland to see the pantomimes and plays. As Arline said, "It was in my blood."

Arline, her husband Tommy and their two sons lived in Scotland until 1973, when Tommy was offered a job in Melbourne that was too good to refuse. In 1976 the family moved to Mooroolbark, where they have been ever since. Tommy initially directed a couple of MTG's plays, but eventually settled into the role of helping out with the scenery and music.

The theatre group's first show was performed at the Kilsyth Hall, as the Mooroolbark Community Centre, which now hosts performances, was not built until 1980. That year, MTG was asked to perform an old-time musical at the first Red Earth Festival. Tommy, a musician in his own right, was asked by then-Shire of Lilydale president Kevin Lonnegan to make two lists of requirements—What Would Be Fantastic and What Is Actually Needed. When a piano was added to the wishlist it was at first refused, but Arline persuaded the shire president that they had to have one. The piano that was bought at that time is the same one that is still used in the community centre today.

From those humble beginnings the group carried on, producing two or three shows a year, including one-act and three-act plays, revues and pantomimes. In 1983, the group changed to a format that catered more to adults than children, producing mostly three-act comedies. Seating at the performances is cabaret style and the ticket price includes the program, sherry on arrival, and coffee, tea and cake during the interval.

MTG was initially self-supporting, but it has been helped over the years by the Mooroolbark Lions Club and more recently by the Mooroolbark Community Bank branch of Bendigo Bank.

For all ticket enquiries please phone Arline on 9726 4282

Performance dates:

Friday 9 November - 7:30 pm
 Saturday 10 November - 7:30 pm
 Sunday 11 November - matinee - 1:30 pm
 Thursday 14 November - 7:30 pm
 Friday 16 November - 7:30 pm
 Saturday 17 November - 7:30 pm
 Sunday 18 November - matinee - 1:30 pm



Cast members of "Savage Dilemma" in November 2017

To celebrate MTG's 40th anniversary in November, there will be a special invitation-only preview of the group's new production, *Beyond a Joke*. The following night, 9 November, public performances of the show will begin. *Beyond a Joke* is written by Derek Benfield and directed by Arline Myers—the woman who started it all forty years ago!

Barbara Austin

Mooroolbark
Community Bank®Branch



Nominations Sought for Youth Initiative Award

The Mooroolbark Community Bank Branch of Bendigo Bank is very pleased to announce the inaugural Jean Mitchinson Youth Initiative Award, named after the first director of the Mooroolbark Community Bank.

The award of \$2,000 is open to 15-25 year olds in Mooroolbark and surrounding district, and seeks to recognise those who make a positive contribution to the community.

Nominations are sought from mentors, teachers, coaches and others who work with young people, and recognise their potential to take action on matters that are important to them and which will provide a positive contribution to the community. Nominations close on 30 September this year, and the recipient of the award will be announced at the Mooroolbark Community Bank Branch's Annual General Meeting in November.

For more information and details about how to enter, go to the Bendigo Bank website: bendigobank.com.au



**Lions Club
of
Mooroolbark**

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Living Today in Mooroolbark

Mooroolbark needs your vote!

Help us revitalise the streets of Mooroolbark by voting for the Mooroolbark Street Art project on pickmyproject.vic.gov.au

It's Your Choice



PHOTOS: DEPOSITPHOTOS

How Did I Get Here?

Have you ever wondered how you got to be where you are today? Not so much in a geographical sense, but in terms of your financial position, social situation or health? How much of it do you think might be the result of a few seemingly unimportant choices that you have made?

I read about a man who got himself into some severe credit card debt. With crippling interest charges, a few thousand dollars of purchases turned quickly into \$33,000 of debt that he is struggling to pay off years later. The initial pleasure of getting what he wanted before he had the money to pay for it has cost him dearly. If he'd waited a little and saved, he could have easily afforded those possessions. Just the amount of interest he was charged on his loan could have bought him goods worth ten times the value of his original purchase!

Too many of us find ourselves in situations like this—we end up making poor decisions that alter the course of our lives, perhaps tragically, and the lives of those around us.

What Went Wrong?

How do we get ourselves into these difficult situations? If we had understood the situation better or sought advice, might we have decided differently and saved a lot of pain and anguish to ourselves and our families? Most of these things don't happen overnight. It takes time to get addicted to smoking or gambling. It takes time to become overweight. It takes time to get into thousands of dollars in debt.

Maybe we have allowed the wrong people to have too much power over our decisions: the media, celebrities, or individuals we know who are a bad influence. We need to be careful about which people we allow to affect our

choices. It's important to carefully consider which people to listen to, take advice from, and model ourselves after. Perhaps we didn't let the right people—our concerned spouse, friends or family members—have enough influence over our choices. We might have ignored the subtle pleas from those who bravely questioned what we were doing.

Perhaps we put too much trust in those who don't have our best interests at heart. Advertising, for example, is simply propaganda for businesses that want us to buy their products. These businesses don't know or care about our personal situation or financial circumstances. We need to be on our guard against those who have something to gain by swaying our viewpoint, no matter how appealing the deal or product may seem at the time.

For many of us, impatience can be a downfall. There are a number of services that

let customers buy now and pay later, often over several months, with no interest charges. However, if it isn't all paid off by the agreed date, the interest kicks in, drastically bumping up the total cost. The \$500 item bought on a sweet deal turns out to be \$1200 before we know what happened. The deal turns out to be not so sweet. If we can't exercise patience, we can easily find ourselves in a difficult economic situation, which can lead to many aspects of our lives becoming filled with stress and trouble.

Lack of willpower or self-control can be a factor, too. Sometimes we just don't resist the very things that we know will end up harming us in the long run.

It is easy to lose touch with the reality of our situation. It can be tempting to just not think about what is happening, or to absorb ourselves with other activities. But it is vital to take stock of where we are and where we are headed; we need to be realistic about the state of our affairs before they escalate any further.

There is a Way Out

Thankfully, there are ways out of the messes we get into. With hard work, patience, time, and appropriate support we can get our lives back on track. We need to:

Be Honest. We have to acknowledge what led us to this point. More importantly, we need to decide whether we want to stay where we are—or whether we really want to change our approach to things like money, time, food, and entertainment.

Seek Support. Seek counsel from friends or professionals who have a good understanding of the situation. Most of us will need a certain level of support. Professional help is available for money matters, diet issues, addictions and all sorts of challenges we face in this world. A good friend or mentor can also guide us forward and help us solve what seems unsolvable.

Prioritise. Where do we need to spend our money first? It makes no sense to prioritise our entertainment or takeaway food budget over our groceries. Likewise, if we prioritise socialising or working long hours over getting a good night's sleep, our health will suffer.

Think Small. Understand the importance of small decisions, like choosing to walk instead of drive, or declining a slice of cake. Most of us can only put rubbish fuel into our bodies for a while before sickness and disease set in, so we need to start making changes now, no matter how small. Financially, deciding not to purchase that weekly magazine or daily cappuccino can add up to quite a saving over time. It only takes a little change to make a difference.

Appreciate successes. That small positive step can start a chain reaction. As we see the rewards accumulate, we can begin to enjoy the process. Although there will inevitably be setbacks along the way, there will also be a sense of relief as our life starts to progress in the way that we want it to.

Be realistic. Huge changes probably won't be immediately obvious, but don't give up. Understand that even a little change can start to make a real difference, and don't quit before the dream has any hope of becoming a practical and well-founded reality.

Start now. It's hard to take that first step, but we must if we want to make a difference in our own lives. Our journey back to financial stability, better health and other improvement starts with a phone call for help, better choices, or a firm commitment to change.

Make a Choice

Let's all ask the big questions: How did I get here, and where am I going? And, if we don't like the answers, we need to choose to make a change. There's no better time than right now to make the small choices that will eventually lead to significant changes in our lives.

■ Steve Steel

Free Family Movie Night

EARLY MAN

Meet Dug and Hognob, history's first besties. The best friends and the rest of their tribe face a threat to their simple way of life in the form of Lord Nooth, who plans to take over their land and transform it into a giant mine. Dug decides to win his home back from the powerful enemy by challenging the invaders to a game of soccer.



This is a joint community service extended to families by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship & Mooroolbark Community Centre

26 September 2018
7:30 pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre

Free ice-cream, tea & coffee available

To reserve your tickets phone
1300 368 333

or book online at

www.culturetracks.info

* If you have not made a booking, please come anyway, as uncollected tickets may be reissued at 7:15 pm.



The 15th annual tree-planting day was held on 29 July, and once again the event was well attended by enthusiastic gardeners ready to help beautify Mooroolbark. Individuals, families, and community groups turned up, gardening tools in hand, to plant the 300 or so grasses and shrubs supplied by Yarra Ranges Council. People worked quickly to prepare the soil and plant the trees, before relaxing with a cuppa and admiring both their most recent handiwork and the growth of the previous seasons' planting. One of the highlights of the day was seeing two or three generations of families working on the project together. Georgia, left, seems to be contemplating her next move as her grandfather prepares to plant a seedling.

PHOTO: MARY BOURCHIER



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Making The Flag

Every year around the fourth of July, America celebrates its independence. One of the most obvious signs of this celebration is the dozens, sometimes hundreds, of American flags you can see adorning homes, businesses, and of course the graves of veterans. And while we all can recognise the American flag—with its fifty white stars for the fifty states, and thirteen red and white stripes, one for each of the original colonies—we would be unlikely to think about the people who make them, stitching each star and stripe into place.

One of those special people is Aaron Alexander, a young man from California with learning disabilities. But he hasn't allowed his physical setbacks to stop him. Each day he shows up for work prepared and dedicated, sitting at his sewing machine, checking every single stitch on every single flag he makes. His work ethic and attention to detail reminded me of this verse from Proverbs: "Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men."¹

True to that timeless wisdom, Aaron's work has been recognised as some of the best in the

country. It is so good, in fact, that his flags are now used to honour the fallen soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. And while this is an incredible honour for any American, for Aaron it bears special personal significance.

You see, Aaron's father was a Navy veteran. And when his father passed away, Aaron himself crafted the flag that would drape his father's coffin. The feeling of completing that task was both humbling and fulfilling for him. In his way, he was able to use his skills to bring honour to his father, who like many Americans, fought for that celebrated red, white and blue flag.

Aaron's example of honouring the service of those who have died to protect his nation,



in taking pride and using great skill in even the smallest of details, reminds us of an even greater sacrifice, made for each one of us in a far-off land long ago. And we too should be inspired to use all our gifts and abilities in such a way that they reflect the goodness, glory and faithfulness of the Lord and God of all cultures, nations and peoples!

Greg Williams
Speaking of Life

¹ Proverbs 22:29, NASB

A Passion for Reconciliation

When Ken and Katharine Davies began sharing their life together more than 50 years ago, they were both drawn to learn as much as they could about the challenges and struggles faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Together, the experiences they had and the things they learned sparked what was to become a life-long shared interest in, and commitment to, helping our Indigenous people. Their joint passion for supporting our first Australians continues to burn brightly today.

The Davies are long-time members of St Margaret's Uniting Church, Mooroolbark. They first joined the Hull Road congregation in 1963 when it was the Mooroolbark Presbyterian Church. They are each deeply involved in the life of their church, Ken as an elder and Katharine, a deacon. Both are accomplished musicians and are an integral part of St Margaret's Worship Band.

The couple met in 1961 after they had each completed their education at Melbourne University and independently moved to Mildura to take up employment. Ken had been appointed as a maths and science teacher at Mildura High School and Katharine was appointed as deaconess in the Mildura Presbyterian Church. Her role there was to support the local minister by visiting church members, helping with the Sunday School program, working with youth groups

and providing Christian education in schools.

In a country township like Mildura, the two were bound to soon meet up—and they did so, going on to be married in January 1963. After their marriage, they moved into temporary premises in Croydon while their home was being constructed in Mooroolbark. Today, their three children, their spouses and



11 grandchildren all live in close proximity to their Mooroolbark home and are a source of much delight and enjoyment

Over the years Ken and Katharine have responded to many opportunities to connect with Aboriginal people in order to learn more about their languages and culture (especially their music) and to work with various groups to help make a difference.

Currently, they conduct regular meetings of a small 'reconciliation group' in their home as part of ANTaR (Australian Native Title & Reconciliation). The goal of the local group is to raise awareness of Aboriginal needs and to provide support wherever they find opportunity.

In recent times their small group compiled a Reconciliation Week display (27 May-3 June) at Mooroolbark Library—this year based on *Dark Emu* by Bruce Pascoe, a book that provides a fascinating insight for those interested in the precolonial lives of Indigenous Australians. Four years ago the group responded to an opportunity to get to know more Indigenous people in the local community by participating in the work of the food bank at the Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place in Croydon. This led to an invitation to join the group's Yeng Gali Mullum Choir. Originally the choir was made up of Indigenous people only, but is now open to other interested people, with the aim of helping to promote reconciliation.

Ken and Katharine continue to derive great pleasure from learning more about Aboriginal culture through their songs and through participating in the many choral performances that are presented throughout Victoria. It is inspiring to hear the couple speak of their love for contributing to the reconciliation process.

Doug Lewis

National Day of Thanks



On 26 May, more than 200 people participated in the Yarra Ranges Council's 13th annual Mayoral Breakfast, celebrating the National Day of Thanks. It was a time to reflect on our good fortune to be living in such a blessed land and a time to thank the many volunteers and service people who contribute so much to the quality of our community life.

In opening proceedings, Mayor Len Cox spoke passionately of the work of thousands of volunteers throughout the region who work so faithfully and diligently to add to our quality of life. He said, "Our life together would be very different without their commitment to community service." He also thanked the NDT organising committee for their ongoing commitment to providing an annual opportunity to thank the many volunteers who contribute so much towards life together in our region.

This year's breakfast, at the Foothills Conference Centre in Mooroolbark, honoured nine people for their voluntary community contributions in various fields. Those recognised were Ken Barrett, Christine Fyffe, Ken Glenn, Maureen Halit, Helen Parsons, John and Margaret Lowry, Jenny Syme, and Debra Traill.

Master of Ceremonies Randall Bouchier

shared with the audience many moving, encouraging and inspiring anecdotes surrounding the contributions that each volunteer has made. Each representative was presented with a small gift and a certificate of appreciation.

The guest speaker, Reverend Tim Costello, spoke of his concern about the trend in some parts of our society of becoming more self-centred and self-serving. He said that this approach to life tends to lead to less community engagement and a diminishing sense of purpose, meaning and enjoyment in life.

Tim spoke of the many studies that point to the reality that human happiness is largely found through community life and consideration of the needs of others. Going on to note that many of our current social problems centre on isolation, loneliness and lack of meaningful relationships, Tim asserted that humans are "made to live in community" and that people who understand this truth find real happiness and learn true empathy—the deepest expression of who we are as individuals.

Tim mentioned that World Vision receives more financial support from people in poorer postcode areas than from those living in

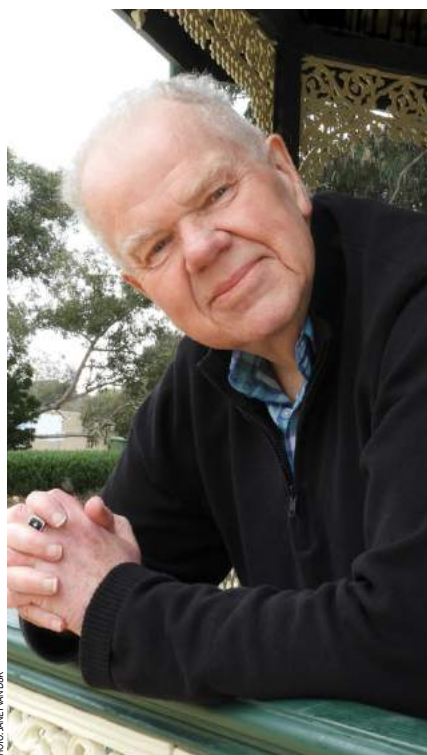


wealthier districts—suggesting that the more wealthy we become, the more self-centred we are likely to be. He encouraged us all to seek true happiness in life by participating in and contributing to community life.

The generous and well-presented breakfast menu and two delightful musical presentations by the Oxley College vocal ensemble contributed significantly to a most enjoyable celebration of community life.

Doug Lewis

Ken Barrett an unsung hero



Ken Barret was honoured at the Yarra Ranges Council's Mayoral Breakfast in May, as one of the local "unsung heroes" who have contributed tirelessly in the service of our community. In introducing Ken, MC Randall Bouchier said, "Ken loves to have a chat! I speak from experience—our phone call became quite lengthy. But I enjoyed it; Ken's a very warm and compassionate man who loves to share his life with others."

"His life of service has been shaped by his Christian faith," continued Randall, "and he has a long history of serving in pastoral visitation, particularly amongst seniors within the Life Ministry Church congregation and also at quite a number of local retirement villages and nursing homes. I was taken by the way Ken values other people, the curiosity and interest he has towards others and the sense of privilege he feels about the way others share things with him."

The motivation behind Ken's involvement with others is simple. "I love people," Ken said. "I seek to be a friend. I love a good chat. It's very rewarding to listen to people's stories. I like helping those who have had a hard time. I particularly enjoy building relationships with some in their twilight years when I'm able to encourage them to enjoy the activities that are offered in their residences

and to remain as active as possible. I find it very moving when I sometimes sit with people, holding their hands as they face their final moments of life."

Ken looks back fondly on the great influence his membership of the YMCA had in his formative years. "The YMCA ran a fourfold program which revolved around our physical, mental, spiritual and social wellbeing," he said. "Once a month we would be engaged in doing social service and we also learnt to run meetings within the program. For many years, when I was working at Norman Bros. Stationers I ran a boys' club—The Buccaneers—in South Melbourne. I'd go there straight after work. Subsequently there were youth camps at Shoreham and, as our children grew, significant involvement in 'Little Aths' in the Lilydale region. For some years, we'd help set up the track each Saturday morning. My wife ran the canteen, and I'd work the microphone."

Randall summed up the strength of Ken's commitment: "I don't get the sense that Ken's going to stop any time soon! He says he's going to continue to volunteer at Kirkbrae until he gets old..."

Doug Lewis

Small Kindnesses


© TERRIE DENTON

As a child, I loved climbing trees and spending long periods of time perched in a secure fork or constructing some kind of makeshift structure to perch on, and my children and grandchildren have been no different. Well-known Melbourne children's author Andy Griffiths has imaginatively tapped into this childhood fascination with his *Treehouse* series of books.¹

Marilyn Leermakers, who has helped improve the lives of many Australians who are “doing it tough”, also indulged her love of reading by spending hours at a time up a tree with a book. I'm glad she didn't stay there, or this brief reflection on her life wouldn't be written!

Marilyn has happy memories of growing up. “I had a lovely childhood; lots of friends, loved school, and survived my brother and sister,” she said. “We had a bit of sibling jealousy there, but I survived! I really enjoyed childhood—great memories.”

“Although I've always been aware of being blessed with a good home—a happy home—I've been aware that there were others who hadn't had that experience.” This understanding, which continued throughout Marilyn's life, started early. “At school I often befriended the underdog or the kids who were on their own.”

“I probably learned that we need to care about others from my mum and dad,” said Marilyn. “I grew up going to Sunday school and having those values instilled: that we are not number one on earth, but there are others we need to care for.”

After Marilyn had trained as a primary school teacher, her passion for those who were not doing so well increased and she began working in special education. She worked with children in mainstream schools who were having social, emotional and educational difficulties. “I did that for most of my teaching career,” she said. “I loved it.”

Taking a break from teaching, Marilyn worked for seven years in respite care, much of the time with children with intellectual and physical disabilities. She values those years. “It was a really interesting time and I learned a lot about people, and people's strength when faced with really difficult circumstances.” Marilyn's first placement saw her working weekends, taking children out on trips. She seemed to always lean towards working with people who had some level of disadvantage. “I think I learned a lot from them,” said Marilyn, “as I helped them to learn things as well.”

Later, Marilyn began working for World Vision when they implemented the LinC₂ program around Australia. “I was interested because LinC₂ focused on people who need a supportive hand—perhaps aged people, or people with disabilities, or families in crisis, or people with mental illness and so on. The idea was that, as there are human and other resources in the community, let's make sure they're put to good use by assisting others in need.”

Marilyn believes that our primary purpose in life runs counter to self-centredness. “We're part of a family of humans and I really believe that we have a responsibility

¹ Illustrated by Terry Denton, the *13-Storey Treehouse* was the first of the series in 2011, followed each subsequent year with an expanding number of storeys. The most recent, released this year, is *The 104-Storey Treehouse*.

for one another, whether it's our family, our neighbour, somebody overseas. Wherever we see need, we have a responsibility to act in whatever way we can. The reality is that sometimes we can do very little, but even that very little can bring benefit to those around us."

Like most people, Marylin has also experienced tough times, parts of the journey which have been "absolutely horrible". Importantly, though, she had people who supported her. "When we go through 'stuff', and even if it's just a short-term thing, knowing that somebody cares can be an incredible thing."

"For example, I can remember one time being at my wits end when our oldest son was ill. I was working full time, and some days the stresses were so extreme that I could open the fridge, look at it for 20 minutes, but be unable to think of what to do. I can remember my mother walking through the door and just placing a cooked dinner on the table. Acts of kindness can be as simple as that—understanding what someone's need is at the moment and where they need support, and just doing something, even if it's small. It could make a huge difference."

Marylin married John when she was 20, and they now have two children in their early forties. Both live on the extended-family property in Woori Yallock. Marilyn elaborated: "Forty years ago, my sister's family and our family decided that we'd sell our properties and buy a property where we could live together. We bought 16 acres in Woori Yallock and built separate houses joined in the middle, with a granny flat underneath for Mum. We built another flat on the property for my husband's brother, who was quadriplegic. In later years, we put up another granny flat for John's dad. At one stage, we had 14 people from four generations living there."

What Marylin refers to as "the best thing I've ever done" came about as an opportunity she'd enjoyed while working for World Vision. KIDSHOPE AUS (KHA) began after Marylin obtained permission to adapt World Vision's American initiative to Australian conditions. World Vision describes KHA as:

"... a program that connects a local church with a local primary school to invest in the development and transformation of vulnerable children through the power of one-to-one mentoring... KHA is a program licensed by KIDS HOPE USA and has been operating in Australia

since late 2003. In 2002, Marylin Leermakers, a World Vision employee, researched and visited the KIDS HOPE USA program and secured an agreement for the program to be introduced in Australia under the auspice of World Vision Australia. The first KHA programs became operational in February 2004."²

Marylin understands that people's perceptions about churches can sometimes be an obstacle to development and growth. She said, "The church thing can get in the way with some people you want to partner with. Eighty five percent of what you see in the press about the church is bad, but 85 percent of what actually happens—what the churches do—is good, but rarely reported."

"As we launched KHA we knew that there was a risk that schools may not be willing to allow churches to work with them. Instead, we experienced wide acceptance. KHA was accepted so well and so widely that we were greatly encouraged."

Fourteen years later, KHA operates as an independent not-for-profit organisation with relational ties to World Vision. It continues to serve hundreds of needy children and families across Australia, as trained mentors spend an hour each week with their school-designated child.

"KidsHope is directly focused on children," said Marylin. "That's always been a passion of mine, to see kids that are struggling be supported and for them to know that they're loved—because, very sadly, some kids don't know that."

For Marylin, it's about "just being aware of the vulnerable and finding ways to support help to improve, and have a positive impact. There is a reason to be—there's a reason that God's put you here—it's not just to have a happy life, or a careless life. It's to actually have an impact somewhere, somehow. It might be on one person, or it may be on one hundred, but to have a positive impact on someone's life."

"It's important that we understand that even small commitments and actions can make huge differences to people," said Marylin. "Sometimes we hold back because we might think we can't do anything, or perhaps we don't know where to start."

² www.kidshopeaus.org.au. The website also provides access to a video clip of Tim Costello (former CEO of World Vision) speaking of his understanding of KHA.



PHOTO SUPPLIED

Those who are looking for ways to have this positive effect on the lives of others can reach out to LinC and KHA, both of which have provided many in our communities with opportunities to commit to serving others.³

"When we give people an opportunity to do something that is manageable, they are willing to take it on," said Marylin. She acknowledges that all of us have demands on our time, but believes that we can all find time for things if we want to. "If we're open to small things, then KHA and LinC provide practical ways to help."

Marylin believes that these small kindnesses can make a world of difference. "Things can sometimes look too hard, or too big, but as we look for the small things, the practical things, we're able to make a difference for someone."

Randall Bouchier



³ For more details about LinC in this area and KHA go to www.lincyarravalley.org.au and www.kidshopeaus.org.au

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Introducing "On Your Doorstep"

We're excited to introduce a new *Living Today* feature which we hope will encourage readers to share their knowledge about attractions and facilities in and near the beautiful Yarra Ranges. The new occasional feature, named "On Your Doorstep", will give people an opportunity to share with other readers some of their favourite spots to visit in the region—places like a park, a historical building, or a walking track.

If you know of a special place but you don't think your writing skills are 'magazine ready', we'd still love you to be involved. *Living Today* will edit submissions if necessary—all we need you to do is supply us with the basic information and a few good quality photos! Just let us know what visitors to the attraction would want to know. Some of the information useful for potential visitors might be:

- What is it? (A brief description of the place)
- Why should I visit? (Best features or things to do)

- Where is it? (Address, what to look out for if it is hard to find)
- When should I go? (Opening hours and best times of the year)
- How much does it cost? (If anything—free activities are always popular)
- What should I bring? (Are food and other items available to buy, if required?)
- How can I get more information? (Phone number, Facebook page or website address)

The first article in our series, below, highlights a wonderful working farm at Yarra Glen, run entirely by volunteers. Gulf Station is holding a special open day in October for those who are unable to visit during one of their usual Thursday open times.

Gulf Station

How many times have you driven past Gulf Station homestead in Yarra Glen and thought that you would like to take a look? Well, here is your chance: Gulf Station will be open to the public on Saturday, 13 October.

Gulf Station is one of the oldest working farms in Australia. The Bell family built the homestead in 1854, and purchased one square mile of farmland from John Dickson. Their lease holding increased over time to 25,000 acres and was farmed for nearly 100 years by the Bell family. In 1976, the state government purchased Gulf Station and appointed the National Trust to manage the property. When the trust took over the property, most of the buildings were derelict and falling down. A band of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers—one of whom is a descendant of the Bell family—took on the task of restoration. Operated entirely by volunteers, this treasured property has been preserved and is open to the public on the first Thursday of each month between 10 am and 2 pm. For more details about the farm, entrance prices, or to make a booking for a group of ten people or more, visit the National Trust website.¹

The farmhouse buildings are delightfully rustic. The homestead's kitchen is detached



with time, and in the sheds are buggies, seeders and harrows, and old farm equipment.

The Clydesdale horses, loved by adults and children alike, are another attraction at Gulf Station. They love to be patted at every chance. Gil was born at Gulf Station and now he is all grown up! After many months of practicing in his harness, he is ready to be shown off to the public on the open day, along with Matt Jeffery's Clydesdale horses.

Gulf Station is located at 1029 Melba Highway, Yarra Glen, and will be open on Saturday 13 October between 10 am and 4 pm. The entrance

fee is \$12 for adults, \$10 concession and \$7 for children. Family tickets, for two adults and two children, are \$35. During the day, there will be tours of the house and farm, bush poetry, plants for sale and an artwork display. Tea and coffee will be available and visitors are encouraged to bring a picnic lunch.

What a great way to spend a couple of hours on a Saturday!

Cathie Berry

from the house, and inside there is a large open fire with cast iron pots and pans lined up above the fireplace ready to be used. The creamery and wash house is attached to the kitchen. The rambling garden surrounding the house is filled with box hedges, roses, lilacs and old-fashioned bulbs and plants. Out the front, there is an orchard with apple, plum, nectarine and quince trees.

The outbuildings are slab and split timbers with timber shingles on the roofs. The old schoolhouse, milking shed, butcher's shop, shearing shed, slaughter house, barn and stables are still standing and require regular repairing, as do the fences. Out in the paddock is an old wooden wagon, weathered



¹ nationaltrust.org.au/places/gulf-station/

Cathie Berry is a Mooroolbark artist who works with a variety of mediums and styles. She has completed a series of twenty paintings of Gulf Station, which will be on display at the farm's open day. Cathie has also been selected as one of the artists featured at Yarra Valley's Open Studios. Cathie's studio will be held on 10 and 11 November at Coombe Yarra Valley restaurant in Coldstream. For more information, visit the Yarra Valley Arts website.²

² yarravalleyarts.org.au/yvaopenstudios

There is an exciting line-up of Culture Tracks events ahead at Mooroolbark Community Centre, brought to you by Yarra Ranges Council.

A cuddly tiger, Pevan, has all the dance moves. Alongside his friend, the musical pocket rocket Sarah, they perform a lively and energetic show, **Pevan & Sarah**.

The performance is the brainchild of two Melbourne primary school teachers who began writing music for kids, tackling everyday social and emotional issues that were apparent in the classroom. They deliver musical hits with a lesson such as "It's OK to make mistakes", "Give it a Go" and "Don't Pop My Bubble", as well as a range of songs that make you get up, dance and have fun.

The show has won the 2017 "Best Live Children's Entertainment" award at the *What's On for Kids Awards*, all in their quest to educate and entertain young children and their families.

Music lovers rejoice! The impressive 50-piece **Victorian Concert Orchestra** performs on 9 September and will be sure to fill your ears and hearts with its upbeat music. The ever-changing program incorporates works by classical masters like Bach and Mozart, jaunty favourites from

musical theatre and contemporary composers (think *Star Wars* theme music).

Art buffs, make sure you check out Bronwyn Ward's exhibition, **Murmuration**, at the Red Earth Gallery until 22 September. Through her works on paper, Bronwyn explores an ideal community, where the taboos around talking of death and dying have gone, and preparing for a death becomes a part of community life.

As part of the next school holiday program, there is plenty to keep the little culture-enthusiasts entertained. There are **Pottery Classes** to let your kids' creativity shine. Suitable for ages nine and up, the classes allow children to create their own masterpiece to take home, and have the opportunity to get fabulously dirty at the same time.

A free film, *Early Man*, will be shown on 26 September thanks to our partnership with Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship. This is always a great family night out in the school holidays.

For more information on the activities listed here, and those still to be listed, please go to www.culturetracks.info or call in to Mooroolbark Community Centre at 125 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark.



Pevan & Sarah's children's music show is upbeat, catchy and infectious

Your Next Hit of Culture Tracks

Support for more women councillors

Advocacy group Voices of Women (VoW) is hosting Women in Government workshops over several months this year, to provide an avenue for Yarra Ranges women to learn about local government and why we need more female councillors.

The workshops, held at Yarra Ranges Council venues, will explain how local government works, the role of a councillor, and will inspire participants to support more women to run for council in 2020.

Female councillors from the eastern metropolitan region will be speaking at the sessions, to share their experiences campaigning in their local communities and what they learned and achieved along the way after being elected.

VoW president and small business owner Sue West said the sessions and upcoming mentoring program would assist in addressing and supporting candidates through all phases, from putting their hands up to become a councillor to providing support and encouragement to the candidates.

"Our aim is to create a groundswell of community based support and increase the awareness in the community of the need for and the importance of female representation in decision making," Ms West said.

"Women make up more than half the population in the Yarra Ranges, so women should



Manningham City Council Deputy Mayor Michelle Kleinert, Voices of Women President Sue West and Yarra Ranges Cr Fiona McAllister

be adequately represented in our community. There needs to be diversity, reflecting different perspectives, experience, and leadership styles."

Ms West said there were opportunities for women to support the process of ensuring that strong female candidates become available to run by contributing to administration, marketing, door knocking, childcare or even moral support.

Yarra Ranges Councillor Fiona McAllister said that women interacted on a daily basis with council services in terms of childcare, education, adult care services, libraries, sporting facilities and business community events and made the majority of phone calls to council offices.

"Despite women constantly engaging with the services, we are often under-represented on local councils, particularly in the Yarra Ranges, where currently I am the only female councillor," Cr McAllister said.

"It wasn't always this way and we would like to see that change because being a councillor is a very rewarding experience which offers you the ability to influence outcomes for your community."

Manningham City Council Deputy Mayor Michelle Kleinert said she decided to campaign

to be a councillor after writing a letter of complaint to council over a minor issue.

"I wasn't happy with the response I got and soon after that a friend encouraged me to run and said I would make a good councillor because I enjoy helping others," Cr Kleinert said. "I thought you had to be a retired teacher, a solicitor or an older man, and soon found that wasn't the case."

"I spent a couple of hundred dollars on my campaign and set up outside the supermarket where people asked me questions, which helped me realise why I was there and what I stand for."

Cr Kleinert, Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) Victorian branch president, will be speaking at three of the sessions and will answer questions from participants about being a councillor.

The Women in Council project is supported by VoW, Yarra Ranges Council, Victorian Local Government Association and Eastern Health's Health Promotion.

Anna Chisholm
Yarra Ranges Council

Voices of Women workshop schedule:

Thursday, 13 September 2018 | 10:30 am to 12:00 pm
at Montrose Library

Thursday, 11 October 2018 | 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
at Belgrave Library

Thursday, 25 October 2018 | 5:30 pm to 07:00 pm
at Healesville Library

Thursday, 08 November 2018 | 10:30 am to 12:00 pm
at Mooroolbark Library

To register to attend a session, please email contactus@voicesofwomen.org.au or phone 0417 124 814. Places can also be booked online at eventbrite.com.au.

Community Events Calendar

First Sunday of each month	Craft and Produce Market: Bellbird Park, Swansea Road, next to Lillydale Lake. Rotary Club of Lilydale. All proceeds to local and overseas projects. Contact Rotary Club Lilydale: 0423 558 833.
Friday nights during school term	Fridays@Kids Domain: Activities for primary school age kids. 4-6 pm. Oxley College stadium. Details: phone 9726 8111 or www.lmc.org.au
Monday evenings each week	Scottish Country Dancing: Mondays 8 pm (except public holidays). Beginners and experienced. Minimal charges. St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. Enquiries: 9725 9074.
Second Monday of each month	Mooroolbark Country Women's Association: 1 pm at St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. New members always welcome. Contact Helen Linnie: 9726 0477.
Thursdays during school term	Music Together Program: 0-5 years. Run by trained music therapist. St Margaret's Uniting Church 9:45 am. Morning tea & playtime included. \$10 per session per family. Call Yvonne: 9726 9347.
Thursday evenings each week	Maroondah TOWN Club: (Take Off Weight Naturally). Weekly, starting at 6:30 pm. St Margaret's Uniting Church. Hull Road. For more information call Kaye: 0414 984 062.
Wednesdays during school term	Kilsyth Primary School Playgroup: Painting, story time, activities and games for children 0 - 3½ years. 9:15 am. More info: 9725 4320 or kilsythps.vic.edu.au
Tuesdays & Thursdays	Mooroolbark Men's Shed: 9 am-3 pm. For more information please contact President John Lowry on 9726 9970 or 0419 366 969, or via Facebook.
Tuesdays - Thursdays during school term	GymbaROO: Formative Sensory Perceptual Motor Program for babies, toddlers, and pre-schoolers. Mooroolbark Community Centre. Ph: 9726 8740 mooroolbark@gymbaroo.com.au
10 November	St Margaret's Annual Fete: From 9 am. St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road, Mooroolbark. Lots of goodies for everyone!
11 November	100 Year Armistice Day Service and Celebration: From 10:45 am. Hookey Park. Followed by a concert and free sausage sizzle or bring your own picnic. All welcome.
13 October	Gulf Station Open Day: 10 am-4 pm. Working pioneer farm with fun for all the family. 1029 Melba Highway, Yarra Glen. Tickets \$12 adults, \$7 children, \$35 family.
9-11 November 15-18 November	Mooroolbark Theatre Group: presents <i>Beyond a Joke</i> . Mooroolbark Community Centre. For show times and booking information see article page 7. Tickets \$20 workers, \$18 all concessions.
8 September 13 October 10 November	Urban Harvest: Backyard fruit and vegetable growers—swap your excess produce. Red Earth Community Park, second Saturday each month, 10-11:30 am. Enquiries: Claire Coutts, 0425 700 280
7 December	Community Carols: Picnic dinner from 6:30 pm, carols start 8 pm. 7:50 pm Croydon Citizen's Brass Band. 8:00 pm carols begin. BYO rug or chair; food & battery-operated candles for sale.
Mooroolbark Community Centre and Montrose Town Centre The following special events will be held at Mooroolbark Community Centre (MCC) or Montrose Town Centre (MTC). Unless otherwise indicated, bookings can be made by phoning 1300 368 333 or online: culturetracks.info	
9 September	Victorian Concert Orchestra: 2 pm. Impressive 50-piece symphony orchestra with an ever-changing program with pieces from classical to musical theatre and contemporary. Tickets \$12. info MCC
Until 22 September	Murmuration: Free Red Earth Gallery exhibition by Bronwyn Ward, who imagines a community where talking about death and dying is not taboo. MCC
24, 25 September	Kid's Pottery Classes: 10 am, 11:30 am, 1 pm, 2:30 pm, One hour classes suitable for ages 9+. MCC
26 September	FREE Family Movie Night: Early Man. 7:30 pm. Presented by Mooroolbark Community Centre & Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship. Free ice-cream, tea & coffee. MCC
3 October	Pevan & Sarah: 11 am, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Australia's hottest new act for kids. Tickets \$10.
9 October - 28 November	Adults and Kids Pottery Classes: Mooroolbark Community Centre. For dates and enquiries visit culturetracks.info or phone 1300 368 333.
September - December Third Monday each month	Montrose Movie Club: Great movies in a relaxed theatre environment. Movie, discussion & refreshments. 2018 theme: Book-to-Movie. Annual membership: \$20 /\$15 for ERL members. MTC

Our Community Events calendar offers a free service to local clubs and organisations.

To include entries for your group's community events in future issues please contact
Doug Lewis on 9761 1121 or email calendar@livingtoday.org.au

Note: *Living Today* is distributed quarterly - in the first week of March, June, September and December. Calendar entries need to be submitted one month prior to the distribution date.

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LIVING TODAY in Mooroolbark

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Like to contribute?

If you have a good news story about people or groups
who are an inspiration to the community, please contact
the editor on our church-office phone number or by email
(details above)

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MISSION STATEMENT

To contribute towards and to help to foster
a **growing community spirit** within our
neighbourhood.

We seek to achieve this by:

- highlighting the many positives within our community
- encouraging partnership in community initiatives
- contributing to the process of identifying and addressing community needs and concerns

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acknowledge those partners in each issue.