

LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges

NO. 63 JUNE 2018



- Mooroolbark celebrates—in the rain!
- Are you okay?
- Meet locals Louis Sauzier and Rebecca Julian

Good news stories from your local community

Louis Sauzier

Mauritius! After a visit to the tiny island in the late 1800s, Mark Twain quoted an islander as saying, “Mauritius was made first and then heaven; and that heaven was copied after Mauritius.”

As idyllic as Mauritius is said to be, there have been times of political instability. It was during one such time that Mooroolbark artist Louis Sauzier migrated to Australia as a 19 year old, at a time when the future in Mauritius was clouded by high unemployment and political unrest.

Mauritius has been independent since 1968, and has a colourful history that includes colonial rule by the Dutch, French and finally the British. The island nation is bio-diverse and is surrounded by more than 150 km of white sandy beaches, with lagoons protected from the open sea by the world’s third-largest coral reef,

which surrounds the island.¹

The Lonely Planet travel guide paints a very attractive picture: “A stable political scene, a steady economy that weathered the global financial crisis relatively unscathed, and a general lack of social unrest may not make for great headlines, but put them together and you’ll find a country largely at peace with itself. It is, of course, more complicated than that, but not by much.”²

Louis Sauzier arrived in Australia in 1967. A fifth-generation Mauritian who traces his descent to a French soldier who decided to call Mauritius home, Louis described his childhood in Mauritius as “the greatest childhood of all”, living as he did in an area settled by his great-grandfather, who had given his children parcels of land from his estate for them to settle nearby.

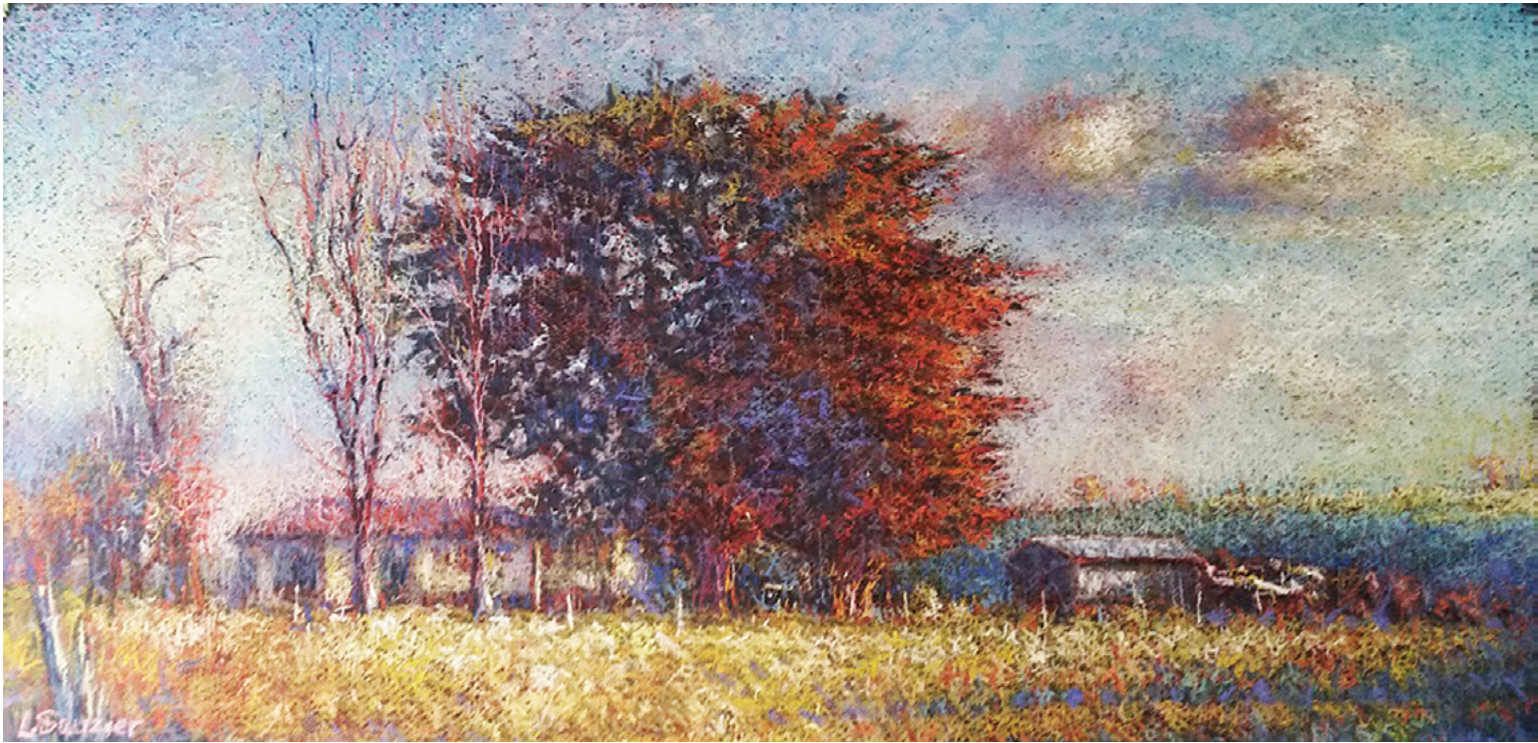
¹ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauritius
² lonelyplanet.com/mauritius/background/destination-today/a/nar/4703dccb-6603-44a0-85f5-09c6703ae4b7/355455

“We had a lot of fun because there was such a large group of us. I still see them—I stay with them when we visit and they stay here when they visit.”

Louis looks back with gratitude for the values inherited from his family, such as marriage fidelity and personal integrity. Reflecting further, he said, “We also had a sense of what was beautiful. My father was an artist as well, and he taught us a lot of things. He taught me the first rudiments of art, which I still practice today. Unfortunately, he died two years before I came to Australia.”

Louis had wanted to be an architect when he arrived in Australia, but, lacking the necessary financial support to pursue that career, he joined the Commonwealth Bank and worked there for about twenty years.

During his early years in Australia, Louis met his wife Diana. Shortly after their marriage, they



Farmhouse



Waves of Sunshine



After the Rain

PHOTOS: LOUIS SAUZIER

moved from Frankston to Mooroolbark to raise their children and to be close to Diana's family, who lived in the Croydon area. Louis enjoyed the charm of Mooroolbark, especially when it was less developed. He's deeply disappointed by the removal of the old trees in front of the station, although he concedes that there are many old trees still around that contribute to Mooroolbark's beauty. "It's a beautiful spot," he said, "And we've the beautiful mountains to look at."

Louis recalls becoming interested in drawing at the age of seven or eight. His father encouraged him, and started to teach him when Louis was in his early teens. "I responded because I loved it," Louis said. "Dad unfortunately died when I was seventeen—he could have helped me even further. He was a good artist who supported his family working as a manager on the docks."

"When I arrived in Australia I basically gave up painting," Louis said. "I was just too busy doing other things." But he could never rid himself of the creative itch! "I took it up again in my mid-20s when I was married with a couple of children, and started to exhibit in various art shows such as the Rotary art shows. We'd take the paintings to the various locations, and I used to sell quite a few tiny pastel works. I think I may have been one of the first to concentrate on pastel in those days."

Louis' story reminded me of American composer Charles Ives, who worked as an insurance salesman, and whose important compositions went largely ignored during his lifetime, but became prominent in due course. Louis mentioned the story of British novelist Neville Shute, whose work in aeronautics meant that his writing was initially a leisure-time pursuit.³

Louis continued, "In my early forties, I decided it was now or never and that I'd study seriously. I took a part-time course at the RMIT and was deeply appreciative of the free university education that Australia offered. It took me four and a half years to complete a Bachelor of Arts, and then I wasn't sure how to use it! At the age of 46, I'd really completed the course for the sheer pleasure of doing something which I enjoyed fully."

"For a time, I switched my methods of painting. I went from small pastels to painting very large canvases in the contemporary expressionistic way which was popular at the time. But slowly, I drifted away from this, back to what I originally liked. For the last ten years I've returned to and developed the style I enjoy. I haven't regretted it—it's been a fantastic trip!"

Along the way, Louis has felt the influence of other artists. "In terms of what I'm doing now, there've been mentors who've helped me as I've attended the occasional workshop,"



PHOTOS RANDALL BOURCHIER

he said. "Melbourne artist Maxwell Wilks has helped me a great deal as I've worked on developing my own style. I'm still developing, but I learned things from Maxwell's method of painting. He paints very quickly and decisively and has a great sense of composition. Nothing complicated...incisiveness is key to a good painting, I feel, apart from all the other basic things like composition, colour and so on. I've tried to emulate some of those qualities, and I'm getting there, developing my own style."⁴

Louis identifies with the impressionist style of painting. "I admire painters from that movement—whether French, British, whatever. I could mention many, but Monet and Van Gogh come to mind along with Australians Streeton, Roberts, Davies and Withers, whose talents have influenced countless artists in this country."

"In my work, I like to capture an elusive, transient moment of nature. When you look at something you tend to retain one thing; it may be a tree in the countryside. It's that tree which is important. It can be worked out in any amount of detail. The rest of the scene, the eye doesn't record straight away. You can turn your head and notice the rest, but initially it's that one tree and that's what you're converging all your efforts onto, in your composition, to ensure that this stands out as the object of your investigation."

An artist bio at website Gallery 247 describes Louis' work: "The landscape in all its changing moods has been his main source of inspiration; the objective being to capture the light as it illuminates and transforms all things in the physical world." For Louis, pastels are

the ideal tool for bringing his art to life. "Pastel is a medium of expression unlike any I have encountered. The brilliancy of tone of which it is capable is an attribute that is commonly assigned to it but, for my part, I have found its additional graphic qualities unrivalled and admirably suited to my own temperament."⁵

The high points in Louis' life have been both personal and professional. He mentioned his excitement, during the '70s and '80s, of selling his first paintings. "Someone's looked at it, loved it and bought it. That's great. It gives you a shot in the arm and keeps you going."

On the personal front, his family is most important. "I'd have to mention my children and wife Diana—a great wife and companion—we've been married for over forty years. That's been wonderful! Most people would have to say the same. It's wonderful to have our children and grandchildren around us."

It has only been in the past five or six years that Louis has been able to devote himself fully to his art. "In the early years, there was not much time—or sales—when I was working full time, but I persevered because I loved painting," he said. "Now I'm beginning to reap some rewards for a lot of hard work. I'm now beginning to enjoy greater public interest in my work. There have been some good prizes and awards and, significantly, my first solo exhibition two or three years ago. That has been fantastic. Let's hope that I can work another ten years like this. I'd like to see where it takes me!"



Randall Bouchier

³ Shute settled in Australia later in life, and continued to write prolifically.

⁴ <https://maxwellwilks.com>

⁵ gallery247.com.au/louis-sauzier/artist-bio



celebrate mooroolbark inc.



And the bands played on ...

The heavens opened up—and the rain came down! Celebrate Mooroolbark was awash this year—and not with praise for the fine efforts of the organising committee and the hardworking volunteers, but *literally* awash. The clouds that had been threatening since early morning became heavier and rain poured down on Mooroolbark, not stopping until later in the day when everyone had gone home.

However, that didn't stop hundreds of intrepid volunteers and locals from opening up their umbrellas, donning their raincoats and getting into the spirit of the day.

The festival began as usual with 'Red Earth Unearthed' on Friday evening, with the biggest display of local talent we have had for some time. A superb supper supplied by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship was enjoyed by everyone, and special thanks go to the students of Mooroolbark College for their help, and to the Lions Club, whose sponsorship enabled us to provide the prizes.

The following day began with the parade, led by special guest Paralympian Don Elgin flanked by a guide and scout each carrying flags. This year, to include more of the local traders, the parade made a left-hand turn into Brice Avenue from Station Street and marched to the end of Manchester Road, turning into the station car park then making its way up to the Red Earth Park.

The opening ceremony got under way with Uncle Vince, nephew of Yarra Yarra Elder Aunty Dot, conducting the Welcome to Country in her place. We were disappointed that Aunty Dot, who has attended the festival for many years, was not able to attend this year due to ill health.

The first drops of rain began at this stage, but festival-goers were determined to enjoy all that was on offer. Many moved to the indoor activities inside the community centre, while others braved the weather and enjoyed the outdoor activities and stalls. Musical acts performed on the main stage and the youth stage, and Doc Henricus Ezechiel Dealer and Tubby the Robot entertained the crowds. MOOP Officer Brendan Jones rode his unicycle to bring awareness to waste and sustainability education and the importance of ensuring there would be no "Matter Out Of Place" on the site once the festival was over.¹

Before long, however, the downpour became heavier and the decision was finally made to close the festival. A group of volunteers, acting as traffic controllers with the help of the SES, assisted the stallholders to make an orderly exit from the park. Within half an hour the ground was empty except for a few brave people, huddled under umbrellas near the main stage

listening to local band Parkville Music.

As usual after an event like this, there are many people to thank: Yolande, our festival coordinator; committee members Cathy, Liz, Craig, Ash, Brent, Andrew, Mary, Matt, Paris, Neil, Bianca, Matilda, Sandy and Daryl (most of whom take on several roles); the Yarra Ranges Council; all our generous sponsors; our volunteers—especially the Mooroolbark College students and members of Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship—the community centre staff; and last but not least, the people of Mooroolbark for their support in attending the festival.

Keep 22 and 23 March free for next year, as we are already preparing for an even bigger and better event—with more suitable weather, we hope! Achieving our goals requires volunteers and sponsors, so please let us know if you can help! Keep an eye on our Facebook page to see what we have planned or contact us on admin@celebratemooroolbark.com.

Barbara Austin
Chair, Celebrate Mooroolbark Committee

Our cover shows MOOP Officer Brendan Jones, entertaining festival-goers while bringing awareness to sustainability and litter management. Photo: Nicole Squelch.

¹ Learn more about waste minimisation and MOOP Patrol at www.facebook.com/mooppatrol

Take Time to Ask...

Are you okay?

Three little words. They might seem casual, even insignificant—but they can carry a life-altering importance. While it only takes a couple of seconds to say them, those three words might start a conversation that changes a life.

It's this potential to alter lives—save lives—that motivates the people behind the *R U OK?* campaign. *R U OK?* is a suicide-prevention charity that aims to start meaningful conversations and create a world where people are more connected to each other.

The idea began in 2009 when Gavin Larkin was seeking to honour his father Barry, who had taken his own life 14 years earlier. Gavin collaborated on a documentary to raise awareness about suicide and to try to protect other families from the pain of losing a loved one to suicide. He soon realised that to change behaviour across the nation, more than a documentary was needed. Before long, the national *R U OK?* campaign was a reality. The campaign encourages Australians to look out for each other, and teaches people of all ages that starting conversations in our schools, workplaces and communities could save a life. The campaign is promoted by media partners and celebrity ambassadors such as Hugh Jackman and Casey Donovan, and financially supported by corporate sponsors.

While *R U OK?* events can be held at any time, the national "day of action" is held on the second Thursday in September, which this year falls on 13 September. On that day, workplaces, sporting clubs and community groups around Australia bring attention to the importance of mateship by hosting barbecues, morning teas, and team challenge events. Local schools such as Mooroolbark College have made *R U OK?* Day an annual event in their school calendar.



PHOTO: JUDITH PETERSON/GETTY IMAGES

We make time to ask...

R U OK?
A conversation could change a life.

IMAGE: R U OK?

R U OK? Campaign Director Katherine Newton said that the idea is to get the conversation started, to encourage people to check on the welfare of a friend, family member or colleague. "It doesn't have to be a

crisis. We all go through everyday things such as relationship breakdowns, financial troubles or a bad time at work—everyday challenges." Katherine said that we can often sense when something is not right with someone we know, particularly if that person seems withdrawn or is behaving out of character. "Trust your gut instinct and have that conversation," said Katherine.

The *R U OK?* website gives detailed information about how to start the conversation, such as being prepared and in the right frame of mind, and choosing a good time to ask. It also gives suggestions about how to ask: for example, having a relaxed approach, avoiding confrontation, and listening patiently and without judgment. Once the conversation has been started, stay in touch and show genuine care and concern.

It's important to reach out to people long before the situation becomes urgent, and to help them access support when necessary. *R U OK?* also stresses that if you feel that someone is at a crisis point, call Lifeline (13 11 14) or, if a life is in immediate danger, call 000.

Many *R U OK?* Day events double as fundraisers, and money raised goes toward expanding the campaign's reach and providing free resources throughout the year. It also allows *R U OK?* to continually improve its work through more research and evaluation.

R U OK? has also developed a phone app, *Konnect*, to encourage people to spend more time with those they love. The app was developed after a national survey showed that around half of us spend two hours or less of our weekly downtime connecting with family and friends.

To donate to the campaign, find out more about how to start a conversation, download the app, or get some ideas about hosting your own event on 13 September, visit ruok.org.au

■ Janet Van Dijk

Free Family Movie Night

PADDINGTON 2

Happily living with his adopted English family, the Browns, Paddington the bear is a popular member of the community who spreads joy and marmalade wherever he goes. One day, he finds the perfect present for his beloved aunt's 100th birthday: an antique pop-up book. But when the birthday present is stolen by a mysterious thief, Paddington is framed for the crime. Paddington and the Brown family embark on a quest to unmask the culprit before Aunt Lucy's big celebration.

103 minutes; rated G



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

4 July 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.

"Normal Is Only a Setting on a Washing Machine"

Sarah Aston of Embark Tax Services was only too pleased to assist local Paralympian Rebecca Julian, and so were her parents Fred and Chris Eakins, as they all have a personal connection with the disabled community. Sarah has a brother and two cousins with cerebral palsy, as well as a son who is profoundly Deaf. They saw it as a great opportunity to be able to reach out and help someone achieve all that Rebecca has, despite the obstacles that were holding

her back.¹

Walking into the Embark Tax Services office and being greeted by Sarah, Fred and Chris is a very pleasant experience. One might think that having the old director working with the new director would present problems, but it doesn't. There is much laughter and banter going back and forth, and when asked who is the boss, Sarah pauses and looks at her father Fred, who without any hesitation points to his daughter.

Fred Eakins started his accountancy business in Mooroolbark in 1975. After several moves, including a career change which didn't work out, he finally re-established himself—firstly in their home in Lilydale and then in Brice Avenue, where the business has been ever since. Both father and daughter are certified practising accountants while Chris—Fred's wife and Sarah's mother—is the office manager looking after an ever-growing staff of accountants, bookkeepers and administrators.

From 2000, Sarah worked at

RMIT as an accountant and then World Vision as a strategic accountant, while also working part time with her parents. In 2005, Sarah came on board as a full-time employee. The idea was that she would eventually take over the business, something which was slightly delayed by Sarah having two children. Sarah's eldest child, Jack, received cochlear implants at the age of 15 months to help overcome a profound hearing deficit, which completely changed his life.

Because of their own experience, the family is very aware of the importance of accepting people with a disability, who are simply normal people "caught inside a body", as Fred says. When people talk about others as being "normal", Chris often says, "normal is only a setting on a washing machine."

Barbara Austin

Embark Tax Services is located at 2-4 Brice Ave, Mooroolbark, and is open from 9 am to 5 pm Monday to Friday. Phone 9727 5811 or email: info@embarktax.com.au.



PHOTO: BARBARA AUSTIN

¹ For Rebecca's story, see our article on page 12.

Calling All Musicians!

Are you a musician with a song that you want the world to hear?

Getting your music in front of a worldwide audience might seem impossible—but how about starting small and conquering the world one suburb at a time? With the help of Radio Eastern 98.1 FM's New Talent Music Hour, you could do just that. The new weekly show provides an audience for original compositions, and will also offer a total of \$6000 in prizes over a 12-month period.

The idea for the show was born when the Mooroolbark Community Bank branch of Bendigo Bank approached Radio Eastern about running a competition to promote and support local talent. The radio station agreed that the competition would be an ideal way to encourage younger people to listen to the station, and also boost the profile of local musicians. In conjunction with other local community bank branches, the Mooroolbark Community Bank began working to get the idea off the ground, and on 5 May the first of a series of programs was broadcast. The show will run on Saturday evenings between 6 pm and 7 pm for the next year. Listeners will be able to vote for their favourite songs, and each month the song voted most popular will receive a \$500 prize.

Interest in the new show has been greater than the station expected, and submissions are coming from suburbs all over Melbourne. "We're getting applications from all over the place," said on-air presenter Rick Robison. "The quality of some of the applicants is absolutely amazing." As well as coming from a variety of suburbs, there have been representatives from many different age groups and types of music. "We've had a wide variety," said Rick. "From opera to blues, gospel to country, instrumental to rock—we have it all. It gives us a good music mix for the program."

Each hourly show will present several original songs, and the show format also includes a profile of each artist or group. Listeners are able to vote once for each piece, which Rick believes is important to the integrity of the program. "It means little Johnnie's granddad can't vote thirty thousand times," he said.

Musicians are encouraged to submit a



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/ADRIAN PHOT

recording of their music now for their chance to win. To submit your composition or vote for your favourite song, visit the station website.¹

As a long-term sponsor of the radio station and many other community groups, Mooroolbark Community Bank Branch has been delighted by the feedback to the program. Marketing Manager David Green said, "The response to date has exceeded expectations and we look forward to hearing the marvellous talent that we have somewhat hidden in our midst."

¹ radioeasternfm.awardsplatform.com/



PHOTO: MARY GEORGE

Junior Tennis Thriving with Eastern Region Tennis

Eastern Region recently trialed a new tennis competition for junior beginners. The introduction of our “Red Ball Competition” was the brain-child of a local tennis coach, Matt O’Toole of Platinum Tennis Coaching, along with the Eastern Region Competition Committee.

Five local clubs (Seville Tennis Club, Mt Evelyn Tennis Club, H.E. Parker Tennis Club, Guy Turner Tennis Club and Yarra Glen Tennis Club) took place in the trial season. The clubs formed six teams for the season, which took place over ten weeks on a Sunday between 9 am and 10:30 am. Each team consisted of three children under nine years of age who played a total of three sets of modified doubles using red, low-compression balls and a reduced-size court. For each match, a parent or club supervisor helped the children score and play. Parents and team mates were encouraged to cheer and get involved in the matches.

For the last round of the round-robin season we brought together all of the matches at Mt Evelyn Tennis Club for a fun day and sausage sizzle. The club was a hive of activity with much parent and sibling participation and many Eastern Region convenors and committee members in attendance. The day finished with all participants being awarded a certificate and a red vibration dampener for their tennis racquets.

The season was a great success with everyone involved enjoying the accessibility of the format and the short match times. We are excited to continue to offer the Red Ball Competition for our youngest juniors in the future. Please contact your local tennis club to join and become a player.

Mary George
Eastern Region Tennis Association Competition Committee



PHOTO: BARRIE ALBERT

Annual Tree Planting Day –Please Join Us!

It’s been 14 years since residents of Mooroolbark got together for Mooroolbark’s first annual tree planting day. On 1 August 2004, around 80 people from various community groups planted 700 plants in Hookey Park. Every year since, enthusiastic locals from Mooroolbark and surrounding suburbs have come together once a year to help keep Mooroolbark green. Having a suburb full of trees benefits our health and also helps attract wildlife, muffle traffic noise, reduce wind, and retain rainwater—and it looks beautiful!

This year, our 15th annual planting day will be held on Sunday 29 July between 1 and 3:30 pm, and we’d love to have you join us! Rain or shine, we’ll be there. Some tools will be provided, but it would also be helpful if volunteers can bring their own gardening gloves, mattocks and hammers.

Each year, plants are provided by the Yarra Ranges Council staff, who prepare the ground ahead of time, deliver the plants on the day and remain on site to provide help and guidance. People of all ages and from several community organisations then come together to plant, stake and place guards around the small trees. It doesn’t take long before all the plants are in position and everyone is able to relax and enjoy each other’s company over a hot drink and a delicious afternoon tea provided by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship.

The location this year is Selina Avenue Reserve (between Struan and Balcombe Avenues), Mooroolbark. We’d love to see you there!

Anzac Day Service



PHOTO: DOUG LEWIS

Tom Steele presents the story of the Last Post bugle call

In warm but overcast weather, an estimated 500 people of all ages participated in this year’s Anzac Day Service at Hookey Park, Mooroolbark.

In opening the service, Chris Clifton, past chaplain of the Lilydale RSL, reminded us that July 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the decisive battles on the Western Front that proved to be the turning point of World War I—leading to the armistice on 11 November of that year. He also reminded us that of 416,809 enlisted Australian troops at that time, 60,000 died and 156,000 were wounded or taken prisoner. For a young country with a population of less than 5 million, that was a huge toll.

The Anzac Requiem was read by Marion Stott of the Mooroolbark History Group. The requiem gives recognition to the contribution of our troops in war throughout our history and for the valuable work

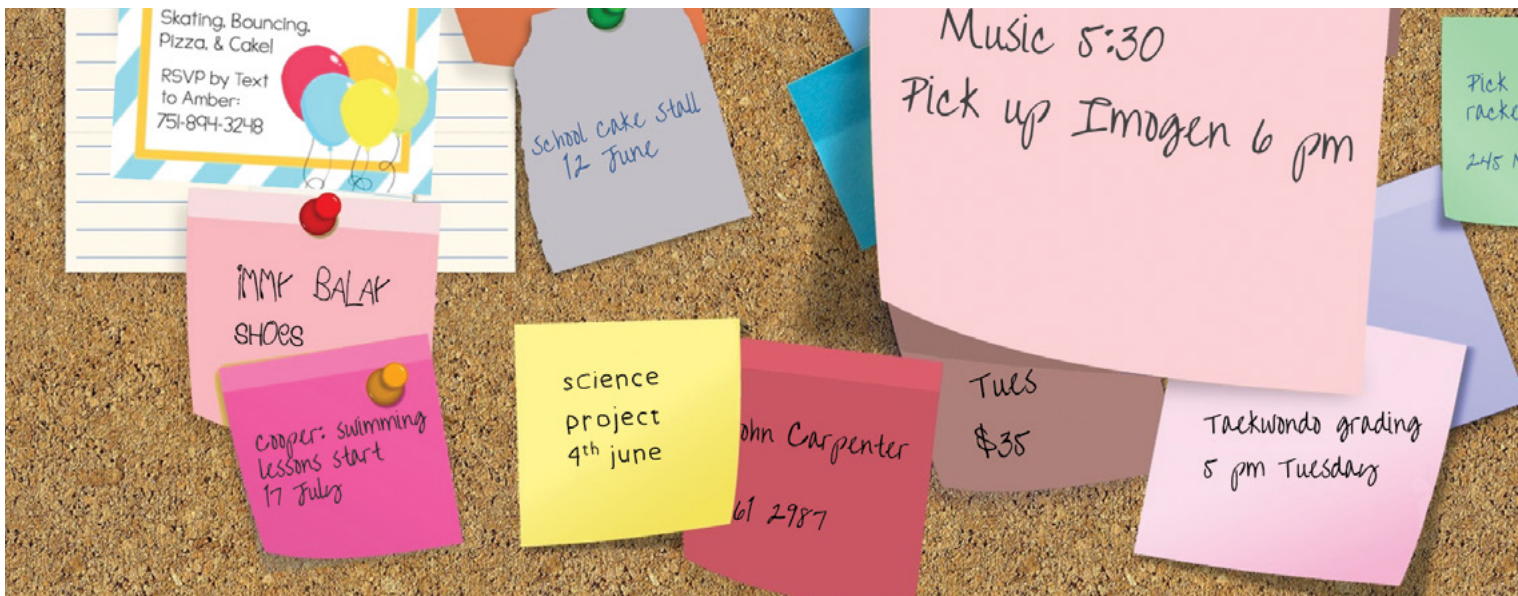
done through our many Australian peace-keeping and humanitarian operations.

Student representatives from local secondary colleges contributed readings and prayers, with Tiani Welch-Phillips from Mooroolbark College presenting a very moving *Young Person’s Perspective of Anzac Day*. Bugler Tom Steele outlined the interesting origins and the development of the Last Post bugle call, and Police Sgt Lee Nichols recited *Ode to the Fallen*.

Wreaths were laid on behalf of many individuals, groups and organisations. The Croydon Brass bands and the Melodia vocal ensemble from Oxley Christian College provided musical accompaniment for the Anzac hymn *O God Our Help* and for the national anthem.

Our community is indebted to the Mooroolbark Lions Club for their ongoing commitment to sponsoring this very special community event each year.

Doug Lewis



Frantic Families

Renea pulled into the driveway and turned off the ignition. She sat in the car, thinking for a few moments. It had been such a busy weekend and now it was Sunday afternoon, almost dinner time. Renea looked in the rear view mirror at her three kids slumped in the back seat, the youngest sound asleep. It had been a hectic weekend of activities: swimming, taekwondo, church and tennis. Then a birthday party. Life was too busy, and now the week was about to begin again with another string of activities.

Many parents would find it easy to empathise with Renea. Most school-aged child are involved with at least one or two extracurricular activities. And with each activity there can be travel, training, practices and social activities. It's easy to see how the week fills up, especially for those with more than one or two children.

Before long, the family timetable can become so overcrowded that life may feel like a merry-go-round, relentlessly spinning. Parents and children can be longing for a break but just aren't sure how to get off and what the ramifications will be if they do.

There are many reasons that families can end up overscheduled. Parents may start out providing the eldest child with some after-school music or sports, and then feel the need to offer similar opportunities to subsequent children. If one child shows talent in a particular area, parents may feel a sense of urgency to provide that child with a head start so that she can become competitive. If another child struggles academically, parents may want him to have extra tutoring so as not to get left behind. Pressure can also come from children themselves, who want to be in the same activities as their friends and are perhaps concerned about missing out.

The level of activity can creep up without parents really being aware of what is happening until they begin to feel overcommitted and stressed. By that stage, it can be difficult to retract what's on offer. To avoid children becoming disappointed or disheartened, parents continue to soldier on.

Although done with the best intentions, too many activities can have serious ramifications for parents, children and family life. Family members may see little of each other—rushing past one another in the hallway with arms full of soccer boots or ballet slippers, on the way to the next activity. Families can struggle to find a time to sit and share a meal together, thereby missing

patches of unscheduled time during the week where they can play and rest. They need periods in the day when they can lose track of time and let their minds wander—an opportunity to get absorbed in something where there is no instruction, performance, rules or deadlines. Like all of us, children need a chance to rest their brain and turn off the stress response. They also need to learn how to manage their own free time and how to deal with feelings of boredom.

Parental mental health can also suffer, with parents feeling tired, stressed and irritable because they haven't had a chance to rest and refuel.

How can you tell if your child is overscheduled? Be alert for signs and symptoms such as irritability, grumpiness, or ongoing complaints of headaches or a sore stomach. Children who are involved in too many activities may grumble about feeling tired all the time, or you may notice them saying 'no' to things that used to be fun for them. If activities are no longer appealing or school grades are dropping, you may need to evaluate the number of activities happening for your child, and for the family in general.

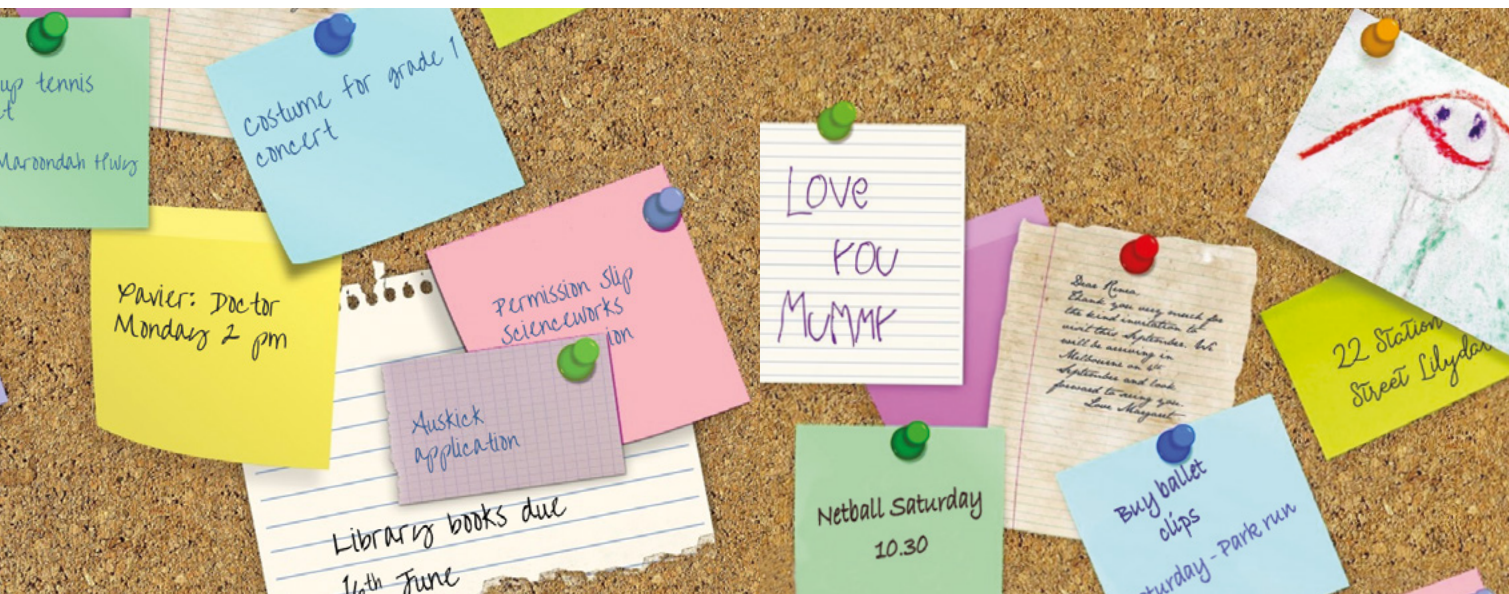
Take stock. Write down all the activities your family has been involved in during the past month. Include preparation and travel times. Use coloured highlighters to map out times of quiet and relaxation. This will give you a general idea of what is currently happening for your family.

Plan for family time and down time. Determine priorities for your family. Are there important occasions that are being missed, such as family mealtimes, visiting relatives or just time together? In his book *Strictly Parenting*, Michael Carr-Gregg



out on one of the most important activities of the day. Research indicates that children and teenagers who regularly eat meals with their families do better in lots of ways, from mental and physical health to school results.

Overscheduling can also be detrimental for child development. Children need substantial



emphasises the importance of scheduling family time. He writes, “such traditions help communicate ‘this is who we are’ and bestow upon families an all-important sense of belonging”. Take the reins back and ensure there are set times when you and your children can do something that is purely enjoyable without any measurable outcome (winning, losing or performing). Try having a family barbecue, going for a walk, or simply playing with the dog.

Find a balance. Consider the appropriate level of activity for your family as a whole, and each of the children as individuals. While one child may thrive on two or three out-of-school activities, another may be content with just one. This is something to discuss with each child and to be reviewed as a family. We might expect that because an older child likes to be involved in a few activities, the younger ones will too. However, this may not be the case. It’s important to find the appropriate balance for each member of the family.

Reduce activities. In order to establish other family priorities such as rest time and family time, parents may need to reduce or drop a couple of activities. These decisions can be difficult and may meet with some resistance from your children. Discuss your thoughts with them and involve them in the decision as much as you can. In the end, though, you may need to be firm about what gets kept and what is dropped. It may help to keep in mind the idea of ‘lifelong learning’; our children have their lives ahead of them, with many years to take up new sports, hobbies and interests.

Think twice before adding to the schedule. Before taking on an activity, consider the commitment. Some activities have hidden obligations such as fundraising, making costumes, rehearsals, social activities or extra practices. Weigh these up and explain them to your child before going ahead. When your children start a new activity, review it at the end of the term and see if they want to continue and are still enjoying it. Although

perseverance is a good quality, it is difficult for children to know what an activity is like until they have actually tried it.

Stay closer to home. Keeping activities local can help to avoid excessive time in the car. Think about ways to carpool so that the travel burden is shared among parents. Consider creative ways to support your child’s interests. Are there skills that your child could learn at home with you, rather than attending an activity? Children may learn just as much from you at home, without the need to attend another function.

Finally, we need to ask: what is all this busyness accomplishing? While we undoubtedly have good motives—allowing our children to gain new skills, make new friendships or spend time away from the TV or internet—how much is it really benefitting our kids? If they are overtired, feel that they are not “good enough” at performance-based activities or rarely have any unscheduled time, it’s not in their best interests.

We all want our children to thrive and do their best, but it is important to also consider the impact of overscheduling. Taking time to establish priorities such as family life and quiet time will help your children to obtain some balance in a busy world.

■ Kate Chivers

Further Reading

Strictly Parenting: Everything you need to know about raising school-aged kids. Michael Carr-Gregg.

“When did over-scheduling our kids become a sign of good parenting?” Kasey Edwards, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 August 2016.

“All Tuckered Out: 10 Signs Your Kids Are Overscheduled” realsimple.com/work-life/family/kids-parenting/overscheduled-kids.

“Making Family Meals Enjoyable: Six Tips” raisingchildren.net.au/articles/mealtimes.html.

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Blessings from the Sky

I know a lot of people who love the birds in their garden. I also know that it's rare for the birds to show real affection in return. But for eight-year-old Gabi Mann of Seattle, Washington, it isn't rare. In fact, it's an everyday reality. Over the past few years, she has befriended the crows that come to her family's garden, taking the trouble to feed each individually. And in return, the crows have begun to bring her gifts: everything from pieces of smooth glass, to buttons, beads, and even lost pieces of jewellery. It's an odd assortment of items, but to Gabi this collection of treasures is more precious than gold. Now, while Gabi is certainly rare in her relationship with her local birds, she isn't the first person who's been brought something precious from the sky.

In the time of the kings of Israel, God warned the prophet Elijah that a famine was coming

upon the land, and told him to leave the city and go out to a ravine in the desert. While he was there, God promised him something special: He told him, "You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there."¹

And sure enough, that's exactly what happened. While Elijah was out in the middle of nowhere, we find that "the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook."

Stop and imagine that! During a drought, Elijah was sent by God into the middle of the desert, where nothing grows and where he was far away from any food supplies—and he was told that his food would be delivered by ravens.

I'm sure even Elijah thought that sounded unreal! But then, sure enough, it happened like clockwork, and every morning and every evening a flock of ravens brought him his food. In one sense, while it isn't surprising that God provides—He is our Father, after all—what can be surprising is how that provision arrives. Yet life is full of stories of God's provision just like Elijah and the ravens.

So I want to encourage all of us to look at the ways that God has provided for us unexpectedly. Where have you experienced something in your life that was remarkable and extraordinary? And when has it occurred when you least expected it?

You might be pleasantly surprised to find out just how often it occurs—many times without our even recognising it!

Joseph Tkach
Speaking of Life

¹ For the full story see 1 Kings 17



RED SHIELD APPEAL

THANK GOD FOR THE SALVOS

Supporting the Community

On the weekend of 26 and 27 May, the Salvation Army's annual Red Shield doorknock appeal was held across Australia. Every year, people gather to collect donations from their local community to help The Salvation Army support those in need who are struggling with a wide range of issues such as domestic violence, financial hardship, homelessness, loneliness, and mental illness. Here at The Salvation Army Mooroolbark, our Emergency Relief team works hard to offer support to families doing it tough. The services offered here include food assistance, case management (ongoing guidance with finances), and financial counselling. We also offer a Positive Lifestyle Program. The PLP methodology takes participants through a self-awareness-raising process, focusing on personal difficulties they may be unable to identify or address. Over the past 12 months, nearly a thousand people have been assisted through our centre.

It is because of the generosity of local communities supporting the Red Shield Appeal that we are able to continue this work. Government funding only makes up



Various weekly activities are held at the Salvation Army's building in Manchester Road.

approximately 30% of all assistance given. To everybody who donates to the Red Shield Appeal, thank you. Each year we look for people willing to help collect by donating two hours of their time leading up to the last weekend in May. If you would like to know more, please call our office on 9727 4777.

Over the past few months, The Salvation Army Corps of Mooroolbark and Healesville have merged, extending our reach into the Yarra Ranges to help support people in need.

At Healesville we have a youth transitional worker at the high school, who also runs our youth drop-in centre on Friday nights. There is a great need to offer our young people a place to turn, not only when they are in strife, but also a safe place to come together.

Our groups continue here in Mooroolbark: our thrift shop, located on Brice Avenue, is open Monday to Saturday and offers affordable clothing and other items to the community. On Tuesdays, at the main building on Manchester Road Chirnside Park, our ladies group meets from 9:30 – 11 am. The group enjoys a wide range of activities, from guest speakers to outings. Mainly Music sessions, for young children, are run each Wednesday and Thursday. We will also have a soup kitchen starting soon, on Mondays from 10 am until 1pm.

The Salvation Army is committed to serving our community and we look forward to the days ahead as we journey with families and see the success of people getting back on top and reliving life. Thank you again to everyone who supports the work of The Salvation Army— may God bless each of you.

Ashley Proctor
Captain



Mooroolbark East
PRIMARY SCHOOL

A Connection with Joy



Joy Primary School students with bags of stationery items provided by MEPS.

At the beginning of 2017, Mooroolbark East Primary School was presented with the unique opportunity to connect with a primary school in Uganda, one of the poorest countries in the world. This opportunity was to become an integral part of our existing Global Education program, which all Prep to Grade 6 students participate in as part of their regular program.

Our initial connection with Joy Primary School in Jinja was facilitated by Anne Marie and Emmanuel from Yimba Uganda, a Ugandan-based organisation dedicated to equipping Ugandan youth with sustainable, income-generating skills. Anne Marie and Emmanuel spent a great deal of time at Joy Primary School working with Joy, the school principal, alongside the production of media which was to be later used to help engage our school community.

The initial response from our school community was very heart-warming. Our students showed great empathy for the students and families at Joy Primary School who were living in extreme poverty. They also developed a greater appreciation for their own resources and opportunities. It seemed only natural for our students to want to help our new friends at Joy

Primary School, as they felt that it just wasn't fair that students were missing out on the many basics which they themselves took for granted—food, water, shelter, healthcare and education.

It soon became evident that the families of Joy Primary School students had severely limited capacity to support themselves. Unlike schools in Australia, Joy Primary School does not receive any funding from its government and therefore relies solely on money received through school fees. Student absenteeism was a huge problem, as many families simply could not afford the fees. It was also feared that many girls would not attend school as their pit latrine was almost full. In consultation with the school principal, it was agreed that the building of a new toilet block should be our first fundraising goal.

Thanks to the many great efforts and selfless donations made by our students, staff and families, \$3500 was quickly raised. Fundraising events included a special Ugandan free-dress day organised by our Junior School Council students, weekly class donations, and even a mobile lemonade stand run by a couple of passionate Grade 5 students. It was truly admirable to watch our students commit themselves with such

passion and selflessness.

Our Grade 6 students also donated profits made from their 'market day'. This extra money was used to provide school bags and classroom supplies for most students at Joy Primary School. It was particularly important for the Grade 6 students, who need these supplies to sit their end-of-year exams in order to be eligible for secondary school.

Our school community was also very supportive of a Christmas fundraiser which enabled approximately sixty families to share a special Christmas lunch together—something which I'm sure most of us take for granted.

Students from both schools also wrote 'pen pal' letters to each other. This proved to be an extremely successful activity, as it gave students the opportunity to connect on a more personal and practical level.

Looking ahead, we are exploring new ways to strengthen our relationship with the Joy Primary School community and to continue our fundraising efforts. Our hope is to pursue projects which will enable increased student participation at school.

Paul Wigraft



Before upgrade

With the help of funds raised by Mooroolbark East Primary School, the toilet block at Joy Primary School received a much-needed upgrade



A Grateful Champion



Have you ever noticed the way that being around grateful people is a real joy?

Since writing for *Living Today*, I've had the privilege of spending some time with, and writing about, two world champion Paralympians—Donnie Elgin and Matt Haanappel.¹ And now, local table tennis champion Rebecca Julian is the latest. All three athletes impressed me not only with their energy and drive for life, but also their profound gratitude for what they'd been able to accomplish in their lives!

I once heard the reigning Paralympic and World Champion in the wheelchair marathon, Kurt Fearnley, respond to a young person's question: "Kurt, have you ever felt sorry for yourself?" With his characteristic grin he replied, "Yep, I did once, for twenty seconds!"

But back to Rebecca...

Growing up in Mooroolbark as the youngest of three children, she speaks very fondly of her mother and father, and of her grandmother, who lived with the family. Rebecca described her childhood as wonderfully happy years and several times expressed her gratitude for living in such a close-knit family. It is clear that Rebecca's sporting successes are greatly enhanced when her family shares the moment with her. She holds the number one ranking in her classification (Para Table Tennis Class 6)

in Australia and has been ranked as high as number two internationally.²

Rebecca attended Oxley College from preschool to year 8, followed by home schooling. Born with cerebral palsy and right hemiplegia, Rebecca was the first student at the college to work with an integration aide. When the benefits of one-on-one learning became apparent, Rebecca's mother offered to home school her for the remainder of her secondary schooling. It was a good move for Rebecca, who appreciated her mother's willingness to engage with the home school network.

Discovering the way that one-on-one learning benefitted her, and that "one size doesn't fit all", was instructive for Rebecca's later work with children as an early childhood teacher—she now teaches the three year olds at Oxley Kids.

In a synopsis for the Australian Sports Foundation website, Rebecca reflected on her primary school sports experience. "As a child I enjoyed participating in sports and games but couldn't run, kick or catch the same as the other kids. So my sporting journey really began after my Physical Education teacher in primary school suggested I try table tennis and my mum took me to Croydon and Districts Table Tennis Association to learn about it."³

"I'm very glad that my sports teacher made the suggestion at a parent-teacher interview," said Rebecca. "It has obviously enabled me to excel in the sporting arena. The support of the Croydon association has also meant a lot to me. I started as a junior player, moved into the senior competition and now am a member of the board, which I'm enjoying. It's good to be able to give back to them, because they've been very good to me over the years. I continue to play in their able-bodied competition two nights a week. It's a good challenge, as I learn to adapt and work through my physical limitations."

In 2014, Rebecca changed coaches. "I have enjoyed the approach of my new coach, past Olympian Trevor Brown, who also lives in Mooroolbark. He's nurtured my game and helped my technique and made table tennis very fun! I'm not sure you can make hard work fun, but we laugh, and we train. There's a good balance between learning and enjoyment, and that's been amazing for my game. My ongoing training involves a Friday night session with Trevor in addition to playing pennant twice a week and spending regular time in the gym."

Rebecca has been influenced by other athletes, and she describes one of her favourites, Roger Federer, as "a great sportsman in every way". "I like his sportsmanship and how he's humble," she said. "How he presents himself on court and the respectful way speaks about

¹ livingtoday.org.au/uploads/LivingTodayIssue42.pdf pp. 2-3 and livingtoday.org.au/uploads/Living%20Today%20March%202018.pdf pp.2-3

² For details about para table tennis classification: paralympic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/APC-classification-information-sheet-Table-Tennis_0.pdf

³ <https://asf.org.au/athletes/rebecca-julian/>

his opponents. He's just an all-round good sport who also loves the people who've gone before him and contributed to the heritage of the game."

Rebecca has had many memorable experiences during her accomplished sporting career. "My best memories are from the 2006 World Championships in Switzerland, competing there against Victoriya Safonova from Ukraine, now from Russia," said Rebecca. "My parents went with me, so that was a very special trip. It was my first really big competition, and my first taste of a demanding international tournament."

"The next one would have been the Beijing Paralympic Games, when as a Class 6, I was playing an opponent above my ranking, a player who was the Class 7 world number one—Kelly van Zon from the Netherlands.⁴ I took two games off her in the best of five. It is still the favourite match I've ever played. And my parents were there for that, too, which was wonderful. They're the two standouts among many international trips, but the trips with my parents have been the best!"

"Both my parents have always been there for me," said Rebecca. "They treated me the same as my siblings and told me I could follow my dreams, and they encouraged me to achieve my goals. They always focussed on what I *could* do, rather than what I can't do. And that helped me—I'm a real go-getter. I like to achieve things and be positive and focus on all my abilities rather than the disabilities."

"And, although not a player, my dad has been very active in my sport and is always there to support me and give me encouraging tips. He enjoys the technical aspects of the game and it's really good to have him in my corner as well."

Rebecca has accomplished much besides sport, and has had to balance the demands of sport, education and career. She said, "After I'd finished my certificate in childcare, I completed my diploma and then my Bachelor of Early Childhood Education at Deakin University. When a job opportunity opened up at Oxley Kids I was thrilled to accept. I love my work—love being able to give back to children and get them excited about learning."

Rebecca continued, "From a sporting perspective, I'd like to think that my own experience with disability enables me to support and encourage children to participate in sport and to advocate for the inclusion of children with a disability. They're just like anyone else, other than the challenges they have, because we all have challenges of various kinds. I think it's important to see the good in other people, no matter what. It's also important to focus on what we can do rather than what we can't—

one of my favourite Bible verses is 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'."

"If I'm not working, I'm playing table tennis or doing something with my Girls Brigade group, where I've been a leader for twelve years at the Mooroolbark Baptist Church, or doing the usual daily chores associated with independent living. I'm busy, but I'm happy! I enjoy my sport, career, life balance, although I do have to tell myself to stop sometimes so that I can have some energising space."

Rebecca has found the community very supportive in helping her achieve her goals. "Local examples are the Three Bean Café and Embark Tax Services," she said.⁵ "I can't speak for the community in general, but I believe that when people know someone with disability it makes things easier for them to understand."

Australia has come a long way in developing pathways for para athletes, according to Rebecca. "Table Tennis Victoria has been very supportive and I'm a former scholarship holder with Victorian Institute of Sport. I've also been grateful to the Paralympic Committee, who try to make the sporting environment as friendly as possible. They not only focus on sporting

At the time of our interview, Rebecca was preparing to travel to Europe, where most of her international competitors play, to compete in tournaments in both Slovakia and Slovenia. Such exposure to top-level competition forms a vital part of her preparations to qualify for the 2020 Paralympics. If she does qualify, Rebecca will become the first Australian para table tennis player to qualify for three Paralympic Games.

Preparing to represent Australia in the Paralympics is an expensive undertaking, and Rebecca must rely on her own savings and the generosity of others. If you would like to financially assist Rebecca to achieve her ambition, she would be very grateful for the contribution.⁵

We give Rebecca our enthusiastic support as she competes. Each time she dons the green and gold, she represents each of us here in Mooroolbark—go for it, Aussie! We look forward to hearing news of your future accomplishments.

Randall Bouchier

⁵ Tax-deductible donations to help Rebecca may be made at <https://asf.org.au/athletes/rebecca-julian/>.



PHOTOS: AUSTRALIAN PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE/CEB/SASA/JOE VAN WINKEL/COMIXIONS

achievements, but also on our life balance. I was a member of the initial para table tennis squad after para table tennis was recognised, and am very excited about the growing number of para table tennis players nationally and around the world."

For young people who want to succeed, Rebecca has some advice: "I would tell them to focus on their dreams, to believe in themselves, and believe in what they want to do, and try their best—and to make sure they surround themselves with supportive, caring people."

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⁴ wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelly_van_Zon



Cheat!

■ I don't read the paper much. Maybe I'll flick through when I am at the noodle shop now and then, but I usually finish up looking at the cars for sale. However, recently I was given a newspaper by a friend, and when reading it I noticed a word that seemed rather repetitive. So much so, that I went back and counted how many times this word appeared.

Cheat: The word was used in commentary ranging from political, sports, education, and social to financial affairs. Even I am aware of the recent debacle with our cricket team and the effect this has had on people of all ages across the nation. I got to wondering: why do people cheat? Are some people more likely to cheat than others, and do people tend to cheat in certain circumstances?

Over 200 years ago, we were a penal colony. For some, cheating provided a means to get their share—that's partly why the convicts were sent here in the beginning. Those who didn't cheat often perished! Have things changed for the better? For some, the attitude of winning at all costs is still prevalent. Cheating is seen as a feasible and acceptable way to solve a difficult problem, achieve a goal or get a suitable outcome. Cheating is also glorified in the media—it's a popular subplot of many action or adventure movies to have the hero use power, intelligence or creativity to rot the system.

Fairness and integrity, the flip side of cheating, are seen by some as passive or weak. They don't think it's admirable to accept a 'raw deal', day after day, and not do anything about it. What is memorable or commendable about a sports person who gets second, third or fourth place?

Despite our background as a penal colony, our nation was founded with Christian principles. Years ago, many people simply didn't cheat because it wasn't the proper way to go about things. Cheating was unnecessary, frowned upon and seen as a desperate measure. This life was not the end of the matter, so rather than trying to get ahead by any means, people lived for the next life. Our nation's leading figures—the statesmen, generals and industrialists who steered and developed our country and gave people ample opportunity to do well—led by example. They did this not with words

alone (although they spoke genuinely and meant what they said), but by deeds done consistently.

It is difficult to know whether cheating is actually more prevalent now or whether it's just that more people are getting caught out. Perhaps with the rise of video surveillance and digital means of comparing information, not to mention the frequency of social media, more people are getting noticed when they don't follow the rules. However, increased laws and surveillance don't give people integrity. It doesn't matter how many rules are made and how tightly they are governed, people will still find loopholes and other ways to get what they want. We can be very imaginative when the pressure is on. How often do we hear terms like 'creative accountant'?

People cheat because they can't, or won't, see things from another's perspective. When caught up in the 'chase' of cheating, people are quick to ignore the effect that violating rules has on other people. Imagine the perspective of a young person who has dedicated countless hours to train for a sporting event only to miss out on his rightful prize, or a hard-working senior citizen who ends up with only fraction of her accumulated superannuation. Someone will always end up bearing the penalty of another's misdeed. These penalties can be extreme, such as injury or death. Suicides resulting from being cheated on or treated unfairly are a terrible burden to bear. When someone cheats, the whole community bears the toll.

The media's focus and fascination with misdemeanours sometimes makes it hard for us to trust our government: their decisions, policies, and behaviour. This can leave us confused, disillusioned and angry. And there is a deeper damage to young hearts and minds as they begin to comprehend and realise how rules are commonly violated—this dishonest behaviour can be seen as ordinary, acceptable and even admirable. Hopefully, teenagers will have a parent, mentor or role model who instils



the value of integrity, who models for them the importance of being honest and fair—not just when convenient, but especially when it's *not!*

Rather than teaching our children to merely follow rules, we can instil values of compassion and honesty that they can demonstrate in their words and deeds.

- When your children become aware of an incidence of dishonesty, take time to talk it through with them. Explain the repercussions of deliberately cheating on mates, family or country and discuss the harm that is done.
- Acquaint your children with examples of men and women who have maintained their integrity through difficult circumstances—the bravery of owning up to mistakes, taking the blame, admitting defeat or taking second place. Provide real-life examples from different arenas of life such as sports, business, creative arts and education. Give them some heroes to admire such as our beloved Bradman—would *he* have done things to bring shame to the sport and nation?

- When your children make their own mistakes, turn it into a learning opportunity rather than condemning them. Discuss how the momentary delight of the cheat compares to the long-term agony of letting everyone down. Explain that even if their cheat works out, they will carry the burden of knowing, deep down, that they let themselves down.

Integrity is challenging. It can take strength to hold firm to what you believe in and not simply follow the herd. When we put honesty ahead of a possible short-term win, we can be good role models for our children.

■ Steve Steel

CULTURE TRACKS

Warm Winter Entertainment with Culture Tracks

This winter the Yarra Ranges Culture Tracks program offers you the chance to experience exceptional arts and culture, with a variety of music, theatre, award-winning movies, engaging exhibitions, workshops and school holiday activities.

Award-Winning Political Thriller

Friday 1 June, 8 pm: Montrose Town Centre presents *A Prudent Man*. This darkly comedic political thriller delves into what makes the Trumps, Abbotts and Hansons of this world tick. What would happen if their world

started to shift ever so slightly? Written and directed by Katy Warner and performed by Lyall Brooks, *A Prudent Man* won the 2016 Melbourne Fringe People's Choice Award.

School Holiday Fun

There's entertainment across the region these school holidays. Take a trip in a giant time machine to get up close and personal with a life-sized T-Rex. Awarded 'Best Children's Show' of the Adelaide Fringe 2016 by the *Adelaide Advertiser*, *Dinosaur Time Machine* is here for two shows at the Montrose Town Centre on 4 July at 11 am and 2 pm, and tickets are just \$10!



PHOTO SUPPLIED

Damian Callinan

Whitehorse Orchestra Children's Concert presents *The Pied Piper of Hamlyn*, complete with music, songs, narrators, characters in costume and wonderful video imagery. This entertaining introduction to orchestra is at Mooroolbark Community Centre on Sunday 8 July at 1 pm and 3 pm. Tickets are \$12 or \$8 concession.

Swingman

Damian Callinan, renowned character and stand-up comedian, confirms what many had already suspected: he suffers from OTTDs (Over The Top Dance Syndrome). After years of eschewing partner dancing and cutting up dance floors on his own, he discovers that the only cure is to learn how to swing dance. 'Lindy hop' on down to the Montrose Town Centre on Thursday 9 August at 8 pm to watch Damian 'shag' his way through his 'boogie woogie' midlife crisis.

Classical Tracks - Continuo Collective

Continuo Collective delights in presenting rarely heard music on rare and beautiful instruments. Continuo Collective's Geoffrey Morris and Samantha Cohen pluck and strum their way through the colourful world of Spanish guitar music from the late renaissance through to the baroque on Sunday 12 August at 2 pm. Be sure to get there early for the 1 pm pre-show talk. Why not share your musical passion with a young companion too? Anyone 26 years and under can enjoy the Classical Tracks concert series with a free ticket. Select A Minor Tix when booking online.¹

Mention the *Living Today* magazine when purchasing any Culture Tracks tickets and be in the running to win two free tickets to Vince Jones & Paul Grabowsky at The Memo on Saturday 23 June.

It's sure to be a colourful winter; we look forward to seeing you at one of our events soon!

Emma Wiking

¹ ach.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Home

Making solar easy for pensioners

Many pensioners are interested in exploring solar energy to save money, but are often put off by the upfront cost and complexity of the schemes. Yarra Ranges Council's new Solar Savers program is breaking down these barriers, helping pensioners to install solar with no upfront costs.

Yarra Ranges Mayor Len Cox said pensioners (seniors or people with a disability) who own their own home could apply to purchase a council-endorsed quality solar system. "Using renewable energy not only reduces our greenhouse gas emissions but in many cases reduces the amount we pay for our electricity," Cr Cox said. "Under this program, the systems will be installed by local contractors and can be purchased with a low-interest bank loan to be paid back gradually over 10 years with zero upfront costs."

Cr Cox said households who signed up would have access to the bank loan (subject to normal bank lending criteria), with power bill savings covering the cost of repayments.

"The Solar Savers program is designed to make it easier for pensioners to get a solar system installed and to ensure they will be better off," Cr Cox said. "Solar Savers will check to make sure every household taking part will be at least \$100 in front."



"The program will help pensioners save money, stay comfortable in extreme weather and lower their emissions."

Solar Savers is a partnership between more than 20 Victorian councils and four regional Greenhouse Alliances.

"It takes the hard work out of solar, by drawing on the expertise of councils and program partners to choose quality, reliable solar systems and a trusted installer," Cr Cox said. "At Yarra Ranges Council, we are proud to be leading the way in the community with renewable energy and helping local households to get on board with this pioneering program."

Sign-ups are open until Friday 13 July.

Contact Solar Savers if you:

- Own your home
- Have a government pension card (aged or disability)
- Are usually at home from 9 am to 5 pm
- Have average to high electricity use (contact Solar Savers if you're unsure)
- Do not currently have solar panels at your home

Homeowners with a pension card and a sunny roof are encouraged to contact Solar Savers to check their eligibility and express interest in the program. Phone 9385 8512 or email info@solarsavers.org.au.



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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 Coral Cunningham: 9728 4479.
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 birth - 3½ years. 9:15 am. More info: 9725 4320 or kilsythps.vic.edu.au
Tuesdays & Thursdays	Mooroolbark Men's Shed: 9 am-3 pm. 91 Swansea Road, Montrose. 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
3 June	Croydon Brass Band presents Winter Melodies: 2pm, St John's Anglican Church, 5 Toorak Avenue, Croydon. Tickets at the door or by phone: 0408 084 130. \$25 including afternoon tea.
16 June	St Margaret's Mid-Year Book Sale: 9:30 am, St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road, Mooroolbark. Books, plants and morning tea.
9 June 14 July, 11 August	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.
18-24 June	Mooroolbark Theatre Group presents comedy <i>Curtain Up</i> by Peter Quilter, directed by Yvonne Miller. Mooroolbark Community Centre, 18-24 June. Tickets \$20/\$18 concession. Bookings advised: Arline 9726 4282.
6-14 July	ARK Theatre presents: <i>The ARKadian Authentic All-Woman Old Time Music Hall the 2nd</i> . Lilydale Heights College PAC. Includes Saturday matinees. Tickets \$20. Full details and booking link at arktheatremelb.com/
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	
31 May – 30 June	Red Earth Gallery Exhibitions: Valley Potters Inc, Red Earth Gallery, Mooroolbark Community Centre, 1300 368 333.
1 June	A Prudent Man: This darkly comedic political thriller asks what it means to be right... in more ways than one. 8 pm MTC. Tickets: \$28, \$24 concession, \$22 groups (6+ people).
4 July	Dinosaur Time Machine: Get up close and personal with a life-sized T-Rex! 11 am & 2 pm MTC. Awarded <i>Adelaide Advertiser's</i> 'Best Children's Show' of the Adelaide Fringe 2016. Tickets \$10.
July school holidays	Children's Pottery: Dates to be announced. Bookings www.culturetracks.info or 1300 368 333.
8 July	The Pied Piper Of Hamlyn: Whitehorse Orchestra Children's Concert. 1 pm & 3 pm MCC. Tickets: \$12, \$8 concession.
16 July	Mooroolbark Community Centre: Term 3 workshops commence –pottery and oil painting.
June – August	Montrose Movie Club presents: <i>Romulus, My Father</i> 18 June; <i>The Dressmaker</i> : 16 July, <i>The Talented Mr Ripley</i> 20 August. 2:30 pm & 6:30 pm. MTC. Membership per year \$20 /\$15 for ERL members.
9 August	Swingman: A new show from Damian Callinan, renowned character and stand-up comedian. 8 pm, MTC. Tickets: \$28, \$24 concession. \$22 groups (6+ people).
12 August	Continuo Collective: rarely heard music on rare and beautiful instruments. . MTC 2 pm, with pre-show talk at 1 pm. Tickets \$26, \$22 concession & FREE A Minor Tix 26 Years & under.

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.

Proudly supporting Living Today in Mooroolbark.

Mooroolbark Community Bank® Branch
Shop 19, 66-74 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark
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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

OUR SPONSORS

Living Today greatly appreciates the valuable contributions made by several businesses which partner with us in serving our local community through this magazine. Their financial sponsorship makes the magazine possible, and we gratefully acknowledge those partners in each issue.