

LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges

NO. 81 DECEMBER 2022



- Summer in the beautiful Yarra Ranges
- Lessons from a hot air balloon flight
- The art of missing out

Good news stories from your local community

The Only Thing Better Than Singing ...

Have you ever heard of Cape Town's Coon Carnival? I hadn't, until I asked Charles DeLong when it was that he became aware that his voice was something special.

I didn't know, either, about the Cape Malays, which, as one website explains, are "... a long-standing people of South Africa who originally came as slaves, political prisoners or exiles from the Dutch East Indies and were brought from countries as spread out as India to Eastern Indonesia."¹

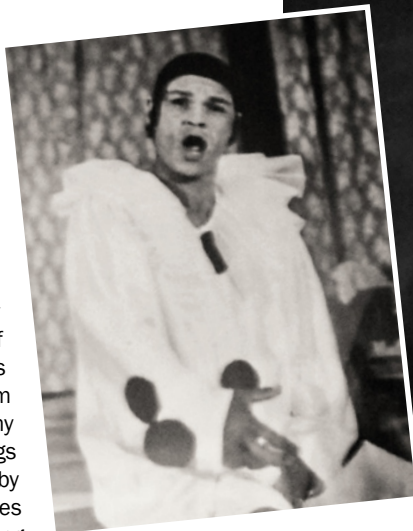
The Coon Carnival festivities arose from the Cape Town practice of awarding slaves an annual 2 January holiday—a "second new year". Musical troupes and other performers made the annual carnival a very colourful affair.

Charles' family, which was designated as "coloured", lived in the Cape Town region. They were related to the bushmen of the Kalahari featured in the 1980 movie *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. Charles told me that as long as he can remember, he sang.

Born in 1935, young Charles was singing at home one day when the leader of one of the carnival musical troupes was passing and heard him singing "Daddy, When Is Mummy Coming Home"—one of the songs Canadian-born boy soprano Bobby Breen had made famous. Charles had learned the song while hearing it played on the family wind-up gramophone. The troupe leader invited Charles to perform with his troupe at the carnival, an invitation that Charles's mother indignantly refused: "No son of mine is going to sing at a Coon Carnival!"

Charles never stopped singing—and he continues to sing! He performed for local residents on 6 November at Kilsyth Memorial Hall, in a concert entitled *Charles DeLong and Friends—an afternoon of gems and excerpts from Grand Opera, Operettas, Musicals and Light Classics*. The concert was the latest of several that the sprightly 88-year-old has organised in support of various medical services, and also bushfire relief, since his successful recovery from a stroke in 2017.

RIGHT: Charles singing // *Trovatore*
BELOW: Charles as Pagliacci—
The Clown



Childhood for Charles seems to have been relatively carefree. Young Charles loved the sea, and he recalls his grandfather and father operating fishing boats. He remembers daring to hide with his friends behind the lighthouse at the end of the Kalk Bay jetty at times when heavy seas would break over the jetty, and diving in less turbulent seas for abalone and crayfish.

But remember that Charles grew up during the apartheid years in South Africa. There were opportunities to sing at school and in local community choirs, but openings for further musical training for a non-white boy were scant. With little or no prospect of a career in music, Charles completed his carpentry apprenticeship at the Cape Technical College. To fulfill his ambition to set up his own sub-contracting business, Charles worked underground in the Kimberly diamond mine, saving his earnings to return to Cape Town to start his new business.

He enjoyed the work and did well. He said,

"I did a lot of jobs on roofs... I began to give 'free roof top concerts', singing while I worked. Residents used to come outside, pretending to water their lawns so they could listen. Of course, they never actually acknowledged me. I was still just a colour to them."

But the men who worked with Charles acknowledged his innate love of singing. One of the men bet him that he couldn't get a principal part with the Eoan Group,² a group founded in 1933 to provide opportunities to the mixed-race community.

² The Eoan Group, founded by Helen Southern Hoit in 1933, was a social and educational centre as well as a cultural association which offered aftercare, physical education for the children and speech classes to the mixed race community of District Six, Cape Town. The group soon added a wide range of activities from ballet, singing, painting, and sewing to drama classes. Drama productions were soon presented and a ballet section was set up in 1935, followed by a choir led by brothers John and Dan Ulster in 1940.

Between 1956 and the mid-1970s, under the direction of musician and conductor Joseph Manca, who joined the group in 1943, the Eoan Group featured the first amateur company composed of coloured people who learnt to sing in the Italian style and perform world-known operas. sahistory.org.za/article/eoan-group#:~:text=The%20EOAN%20Group%20was%20founded,Coloured%20community%20of%20District%20Six.

¹ pilotguides.com/articles/the-cape-malays-of-cape-town/#:~:text=They%20are%20a%20long%20standing,trading%20language%20at%20that%20time.

"I took that bet and went to audition," said Charles "At first I thought they weren't impressed, but one of the singing teachers took the [audition] group aside. When they returned, they welcomed me into their singing school." Three months later Charles was on stage at City Hall performing excerpts from *Il Trovatore*, and nine months after that he performed the entire opera to great acclaim. "Needless to say, I won the bet!" said Charles.

A newspaper clipping in Charles' possession notes that at the time he was 34 years of age, married with four children.³

Charles showed me a seating plan for the Cape Town City Hall. It represents a sad testament to segregation. Of 1288 seats in the huge auditorium, 21 seats



PHOTOS: RANDALL BOURCHIER



Is More Singing!

were set aside for "coloureds", the remainder for "whites." Such practices led to many of Charles' musician friends establishing the Joseph Stone Auditorium so that they could freely perform operatic works where all would be welcome to attend.

As Charles became well known, he was offered a place at the College of Music in Cape Town. He was excited by the opportunity, but refused the offer when the director condescendingly suggested that a person of colour should feel very privileged to receive such an honour. Charles' short fuse ignited and in no uncertain terms he told the director what he could do with the bursary!

Charles' singing teacher Alessandro Rota recommended that instead of studying at the College of Music, he travel to Milan to study with Maestro Carlo Alfieri, who suggested that Charles (whom he referred to as Carlo) was born to sing: "Carlo, you will sing in your coffin, because singers are born, not made!"

It wasn't too many years later that Charles decided to move to Australia, where he felt that he and his family would have greater opportunities and face less prejudice.

After arriving in Australia, Charles and his family settled in East Ringwood. Charles enjoyed some refresher singing lessons at the Melba Conservatorium of Music with Ian Lowe, who is the current musical director of The Melbourne Singers.

By 2008, after about 25 years of living in Australia, Charles had

made a name for himself, not only as an opera singer, but also as a singing teacher.

He is reported as saying, "It is very gratifying working and living in Australia. Lecturers with distinguished degrees in music respect me because although they can tell you about how notes should sound, when I open my mouth, those sounds come out naturally without training".

Like for so many, life brings a mixture of challenge and success. Charles enjoyed musical successes with performances taking him to stages around the world—Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Holland and Greece, in addition to South Africa and Australia. But there have also been challenges! In 1981 the family home in East Ringwood was burnt to the ground, destroying possessions, family memorabilia and records. After Charles persevered and built a beautiful new home for the family, it was repossessed by the bank in 1993 following his

business collapse during what Paul Keating dubbed "the recession we had to have."

But here Charles is, almost 88 at the time I write, preparing for yet another concert—not only bringing joy to lovers of music, but bringing benefit to his adopted community. He enjoys a simple life, appreciating, as he says, "God's good earth, and the gift of the air we breathe. I stay healthy—eating simply and only when I feel hungry. I love life!"

Thank you, Charles for sharing something of your story with me. We here at *Living Today* wish you well. And keep singing! As Ella Fitzgerald once said, "The only thing better than singing is more singing."



Randall Bouchier

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Come join with us
AS WE CELEBRATE
Christmas

9:30 am 25th December 2022
 Mooroolbark Community Centre
 125 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark
 45 minute service with carols,
 communion and message

GRACE COMMUNION
MOOROOLBARK
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mooroolbark.gci.org.au

³ From an article entitled "Bringing Opera Home" by Nina Harvey, published in the 12 December 2006 issue of South Africa's People's Post newspaper, on the occasion of Charles returning home to perform at a special reunion concert at the Joseph Stone Auditorium in Athlone

A note from the editor

Living Today's 20-year anniversary marks a transition

With its September 2022 issue, *Living Today* magazine celebrated 20 years of bringing good news stories to the community! The magazine began in September 2002, with Doug Lewis as editor. By its tenth anniversary, the magazine had doubled in size to 16 pages and had a quarterly distribution of 11,500 copies. Provided as a free gift to the community by Grace Communion Mooroolbark (then known as Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship), the magazine aims to celebrate the achievements and contributions made to the community.

I've been involved with the magazine's production for about 14 years, first as proofreader and sub-editor and then, in 2013, as associate editor. In June 2014, I took over from Doug Lewis as editor. Over that time, it's been an honour to interact with the people of Mooroolbark and surrounding suburbs, learning their personal stories and the interesting history of the area. Now, however, the time has come for me to move on to new endeavours, and this will be my last issue as editor.

Before I say goodbye, I'd like to thank the many

people, most of them unpaid volunteers, who have worked with me on the magazine over the years. While it's impossible to name everyone, I'd especially like to thank some of our core writers: Barbara Austin, Barry Austin, Randall Bouchier, Kate Chivers, Carissa Sianidis, Steve Steel, and Terry Villiers. We've also had beautiful pictures supplied by talented photographers, with many contributions from Jason East, Rupert Lang, Nicole Squelch, and Mark Symonds. There has also been regular input from Yarra Ranges Council, the Celebrate Mooroolbark Committee, Mooroolbark Library, and other community organisations. Thanks also to Carolyn Glennie, our layout designer, who has expertly juggled the various pieces every issue and arranged them into a cohesive, attractive whole.

None of our achievements over the past 20 years would have been possible without the financial backing of our major sponsor, Mooroolbark Community Bank branch of Bendigo Bank, which has supported us from the beginning. We have also been financially assisted by Publication Perspectives, Methven Professionals



Real Estate, and Mooroolbark Denture Clinic. Without these generous contributors, the magazine would not have been able to continue for so many years.

While I'll no longer be at the helm of *Living Today*, I'll be as interested as ever in the people and activities of Mooroolbark, and looking forward to seeing the future direction of the magazine, whatever it may be. Thanks, everyone—it's been a privilege!

Janet Van Dijk
Editor



My son, husband and I recently went hot air ballooning. It was our seven-year-old son's first time. He was *really* excited. He willingly woke at 4 am so we could get to the pick-up point on time. He watched with fascination as they set up and inflated the balloon.

But just as my son was about to climb into the basket, the pilot turned the flame on. It made a very loud noise and we could feel the heat just above our heads. He shrank back in fear. When the flame stopped, we lifted him in, but then the noise started again and he sank to the floor, covering the in the corner, tears streaming down his face. My heart broke for him—from such high hopes for an exciting adventure to paralysing fear.

The flame continued to go on and off as everyone got in and we rose into the air. I stayed on the floor with my son, holding him, being a barrier between him and the flame, covering his ears and guiding him to take deep breaths. After about five minutes he noticed a small gap in the floor and he watched the ground getting further and further away. He liked this. Then he put his head up to look through the larger hole in the side of the basket.

Every now and then he would glance up at the flame

and wince a little. Then he slowly got up and peered over the side. He smiled at me. After about 15 minutes he said he was used to the flame and it wasn't bothering him anymore.

At the end of the flight, my son said it was the best thing ever and asked if we could go again.

This experience struck me as a beautiful analogy for our self-critical thoughts. As such thoughts come and go, they can fill us with fear and prevent us from doing things. We think we need to get rid of them, much like my son wanted the flame to go away at first, but with the right tools and time to practice, we can live our lives with the self-critical thoughts running in the background, not in control of us.

We can lift our focus from these negative thoughts, to take in the rest of our lives and what's most important to us. We can live a fulfilling life and over time reduce the frequency of such thoughts, even if we can't completely rid ourselves of them. That day, my son learned to shake off his paralysing dread and soar above his fears to embrace an exciting new experience.

Louise East

Louise East is a certified Mindset and Life Coach who works with mothers struggling with perfectionism and guilt. She also supports women to understand and navigate the transformation and identity change they experience in motherhood: matrescence. Louise offers one-on-one coaching support as well as group programs and events, including a monthly connection event, called Gather, at The Parent's Hub in Mooroolbark. Louise has a Masters in Adult Education and is trained in Motherhood Studies, Matrescence Support, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Applied Neuroscience. Find out more at moretomum.com.au or on Facebook and Instagram at @moretomum, or email Louise at louise@moretomum.com.au

celebrate mooroolbark festival

Celebrate Mooroolbark is *your* festival! It's a chance to come together and celebrate everything Mooroolbark and surrounds have to offer—from local school performances and dedicated community groups to talented local creators, and our diverse community. This year we turn 21, and to go big we need you!

A big part of our festival is stalls. Whether you have a market stall, or are part of a community group, sporting club, or school, we would love to see you participate in our 2023 festival. We do know that it's getting harder to find volunteers to help with a full-day stall, so this year we'll be offering a short-stay stall option for active living and not-for-profit-groups, which will help your organisation participate in the festival without the full day commitment. We'll be releasing all the information about stalls in mid-November. In the meantime, you can email stalls@celebratemooroolbark.com if you have a query.

Are you a local artisan, crafter, or maker? We have you covered too! The 2023 Yarra Valley Wool and Handicrafts Show will be held on Sunday 19 March. This year we are building on the wonderful event that Mooroolbark Wool created, now run by Celebrate Mooroolbark Inc with the input and guidance of Mooroolbark Wool. We're bringing back the fashion parade, which provides a great opportunity for local textile students to be involved. There'll be competitions for all ages, craft demonstrations, and more! The wool show isn't just for wool and fibre related wares; if it's handmade you can apply, and we can't wait to fill the show with the handiwork of our talented local community.

Perhaps you are interested in getting involved in the festival itself? We still have lots of volunteering opportunities for people of all ages and abilities, or perhaps if you're handy with knitting needles and brimming with crafty ideas you might like to volunteer for the wool show. You don't need experience in event planning, and you only have to put in what you can. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact us on volunteers@celebratemooroolbark.com

Renaë Jones
Chair, Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival



PHOTO: JANET VAN DIJK



PHOTO: JASON EAST

Taking Art to the Streets

When artist Wilani van Wyk-Smit joined the Mooroolbark Street Art Project, she welcomed the opportunity to challenge herself while also helping her local community. "It took me out of my comfort zone, working on site instead of in my lovely comfy studio," she said.

Wilani has been drawing ever since she can remember, and studied graphic design in her home country of South Africa. After moving to Australia more than 20 years ago, she opened her own graphic design and web development studio. However, about five years ago, realising that most of her creative work was "very outcomes-based", Wilani began to seek balance by dedicating more time to her artwork.

While Wilani's pretty depictions of local flowers add vibrance and splashes of colour to the suburban landscape, for Wilani it was about more than just beautifying the area. To ensure the authenticity of her work, she began researching local botany, and was fascinated by what she found. "I was intrigued by what we see as recorded history of the extinct species—we don't know exactly what they looked like, because they're all gone. I found myself wondering if we had missed any of the flora that wasn't recorded—how many species are there that we don't even know existed, and what did they look like?"

As part of her journey of discovery, Wilani examined local flowers under the microscope. "I saw that there were so many beautiful textures and lines inside the flowers that you never see. When you dissect them you can see beautiful forms, so I created some designs based on what I saw from species we have at the moment, and some of the recorded history of extinct species."

"I decided to depict a series of floral artworks in a modern contemporary style, which is not the usual style of historians or botanists," said Wilani. "For me it wasn't about capturing reality, it was more about drawing out the viewer's sense of perception. Nothing is exactly how someone tells the story; there are always multiple perspectives."

Wilani's paintings can be found in Brice Avenue on four concrete bench seats between George Street and Station Street. She will also be



PHOTO: SHIRLEY

extending the artwork to add small pieces on walls around Mooroolbark.

"When you walk around you might see a little petal here or a leaf there," she said. Wilani is one of several artists involved with the Mooroolbark Street Art Project, hosted by Mooroolbark Traders and Community Group in partnership with Yarra Art Rangers, and funded by a Pick My Project Victoria state government grant.

As a Mooroolbark local, Wilani has enjoyed interacting with other residents while working on her paintings. "People have loved what I've done and also what the other artists have done. It's been beautiful to hear their stories—I've had some lovely conversations."

Janet Van Dijk

To see more of Wilani's art, connect with her by searching "wilaniart" on Facebook or Instagram.

Mooroolbark Traders and Community Group

Building a better community

In a world of glitzy shopping centres and state-of-the-art residential high-rise towers, what keeps people coming back to relaxed, comfortably-paced suburban areas like Mooroolbark? The answer, in part, is the work of traders' groups like the Mooroolbark Traders and Community Group, which focus on initiating and supporting activities that will bring more people to the shopping precinct and promote a strong community spirit—making the area a better place to live, work, and visit.

The Mooroolbark Traders and Community Group (MTCG) works tirelessly behind the scenes to create and strengthen connections within the community and bring vibrancy to public spaces. “Our aim is to encourage customers to come into Mooroolbark with their money, and spend it here. We want to make it as attractive as we possibly can,” said MTCG President Geoff Earney. MTCG’s Marketing Officer, Yolande Pickett, explained that supporting local business creates a strong micro-economy. “Flourishing small businesses create more local jobs. Locals being able to work close to home saves money on commuting—people can often walk or cycle to work, increasing mental and physical health,” she said. “In turn, we see further increases in loyalty to our local businesses, where our friends and family work, strengthening community networks, which builds resilience in the face of adversity!”

Each month, members of MTCG meet to discuss community improvements. “It’s a group of like-minded people putting their heads together to see what we can do for the area,” said Geoff. “Businesses don’t usually have the time and resources to run their business and at the same time be entrepreneurial,” he continued. “A shopping area the size of Mooroolbark, with a lot of businesses and a major train station through the middle of it, needs a united voice to speak on behalf of everyone.” For a membership fee of just \$150 a year, local businesses can become partners with MTCG and contribute to that collective voice.

“While the main objective of the partnerships is to benefit the shopping precinct and local business community as a whole, through marketing, fundraising and advocacy, a partnership comes with perks for member businesses,” Yolande explained. At a minimum, each member business receives personal support in creating or updating their business listing on the Mooroolbark website, as well as a couple of featured social media posts. “These features alone are worth more than the \$150 annual membership fee,” said Yolande.

MTCG also acts as a conduit between local businesses and the Yarra Ranges Council, addressing the concerns of traders and applying for financial assistance for various projects to enliven the shopping precinct. Recently, MTCG sought and received a state government grant to refurbish the area known as “Manna Lane”, and bring three more exciting public art projects to the town’s growing collection. Geoff said that this rejuvenation is expected to encourage more people to shop and dine in nearby areas.

The driving force behind all MTCG projects is to deliver further benefits to its business partners. “Our recent success in obtaining a couple of grants from Yarra Ranges Council will fund Christmas promotions and an upgrade to the website,” said Yolande. “The website upgrade will include a two-tier approach to business listings, whereby partner listings will include more content and images, making those businesses stand out among the rest. The site already brings leads to our local businesses and the upgrade is going to attract more traffic to the site.”

Residents may be surprised to learn just how many opportunities to participate in community life are created by MTCG for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. For example, every year, starting in about mid-November, Christmas decorations begin appearing in the streets of Mooroolbark. The

following month, Santa and his elf visit, inviting parents to take their own Santa photos with their children for free, as an accessible alternative to the professional Santa photos offered at a considerable price elsewhere. “That doesn’t just happen,” said Geoff. “Someone has to put that together.” In addition, MTCG welcomes buskers to the area, initiates street art projects, and supports the annual community festival, Celebrate Mooroolbark. The recently developed Mooroolbark Community Connect at Shop 16 The Terrace was also an initiative of MTCG, in partnership with Mooroolbark Umbrella Group.

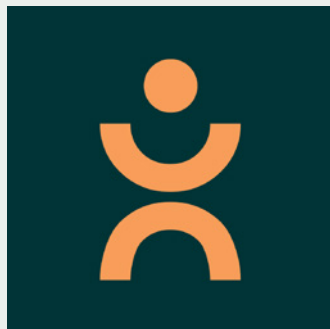
As director of his family business, Methven-Professionals Real Estate, Geoff is grateful for the contributions MTCG makes for the benefit of fellow business owners and the community. He particularly appreciates the efforts of Yolande. “We’re very fortunate to have Yolande, who is doing lots of things to attract people to the town,” he said. “She’s an absolute dynamo.” Another invaluable contributor to the numerous MTCG projects is the group’s Liaison Officer, Ashleigh Clingin, who is currently coordinating Mooroolbark’s Christmas promotions (visit mooroolbark.vic.au for all the details).

To find out how your business can partner with Mooroolbark Traders and Community Group to support initiatives for the betterment of the community, email Ash or Yolande at info@mooroolbark.vic.au or phone 0415 569 238, or phone Geoff on 0438 305 670.

Janet Van Dijk



Every year, Mooroolbark Traders and Community Group organises a visit from Santa and his elf.



Freedom Sports Medicine— Best Victorian Sports Physiotherapy Clinic

Freedom Sports Medicine has sat unobtrusively next to McDonald's since moving to Mooroolbark from Ringwood last year. Behind its modest exterior, this clinic offers a holistic and award-winning approach to sports medicine. Established in 2014, the clinic was awarded the “Best Sports Physiotherapy Clinic, Victoria” at the Health and Pharmaceutical Awards 2022, sponsored by Global Health & Pharma Magazine. With an overarching aim to help individuals get their life back by providing step-by-step education and empowerment in order to effect a positive and permanent change in their wellbeing, the clinic claims to have successfully treated over 6,000 clients in becoming free of pain and injury. Each client's needs and aspirations are thoroughly assessed before their journey to their optimum wellness begins. With a team of experts available to assist clients to achieve their goals, they are launched into a comprehensive and personalised treatment plan that aims to ensure that their injury or chronic pain does not continue or reoccur. According to Global, “The comprehensive training program at Freedom has truly solidified their strengths as a team and is one of the best training programs in Australia.”

Led by Ross Kinsella, (an Ironman, no less!) who has a degree in sports physiotherapy and a master's degree in strength and conditioning, the



Freedom Sports Medicine team members Brendan, Daniel, Sophia, Ross and Kira with their award

team (CEO Sophia, Brendan, Daniel, Juliet, Kira, Julie and Annie) works together to assist clients to be actively in control of achieving their specific goals, even if it's just to walk up the stairs or to run a kilometre without pain. Together they have put hours of work into building systems to support a positive team and to achieve the best of client care.

It's pleasing to see that a sense of thankfulness seems to be Freedom's driving force, and the staff gets together each morning for a thankfulness and appreciation session. This positive and very upbeat location also offers all the latest proven techniques and therapies available in sports medicine, including physiotherapy, myotherapy, dry needling, podiatry, Pilates, and strength and conditioning exercises.

Mary Bouchier

Freedom Sports Medicine is located at 14 Manchester Road, Mooroolbark, and is open Monday to Wednesday 7:30 am-8:00 pm, Thursday and Friday 6:30 am-5:30 pm and Saturday 6:30 am-12:30 pm. For more information, phone 8838 2882.

Knitting Together

Knitting for the pleasure of creating a beautiful and long-lasting item, the comfort of holding a soft, warm garment on your knees on a cold day, the challenge of attempting a new design, or even of trying out your own designs! These are just some of the joys of knitting that some people have rediscovered since the start of the pandemic.

But you don't have to knit alone—any more! Our local “wool shop on the corner”—the Aussie Knitting Co, on the corner of Brice Avenue and Manchester Road¹—has created a gathering place for people to come together to celebrate knitting and crafting.

The store that supplies all our wool, haberdashery and handcrafting needs has extended its activities to not only providing their popular knitting and crafting workshops (knitting, crochet, felting, spinning, weaving), but has transformed part of their premises to a café and quirky community space, called The Hub.

The Hub is a cosy café with a loungeroom vibe, where you can bring along your latest knitting and crafting projects and enjoy a cuppa with friends, old or new, and have a yarn together or pick up the latest trends in the fascinating world of “hand-made”! And the café has easy access to the adjacent Aussie Knitting Co. Wool Shop, where Tony and Brenda are only too happy to supply all your needs for starting or completing your next creation. It also has wheelchair accessibility, as well as indoor toilets and infants' highchairs. There are plenty of cosy, comfortable chairs and



sofas to help you relax and unravel your frayed nerves. Or you can choose a game or puzzle from the communal shelves and share relaxing fun under the cherry blossom “tree.” Additionally, an extensive air-conditioning system has just been installed and will ensure your all-year-round comfort. There are further plans to make this bright and funky venue available for parties, games and trivia nights in the near future.

The bright and welcoming staff—Aleisha, Amy, Bec, Courtney, Jade, Jodie and Maddy—are pleased to be able to serve you teas, coffee, spiders and shakes, along with gourmet pies, fritatas, quiches, toasties, cake and sweets from 9 am until 4:30 pm Mondays to Fridays, and on Saturdays from 9 am to 2 pm.

Mary Bouchier



¹ Austin, Barbara. (2021, June). The Wool Shop on the Corner. *Living Today in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges*, issue 75, p. 6.



Setting Sail on Lillydale Lake

"Scared" is not a description that one might associate with sailing an almost unsinkable sailing boat on the calmness of Lillydale Lake. But that was certainly what Michael Taylor, now president of the Lilydale Sailing Club, felt back in 2016.

At the time, Michael was experiencing some life upheavals. He had retired from his outdoor education business and had recently lost a dear family member. Looking for a way to contribute to the community, he came across the sailing club at Lillydale Lake. On his first visit, after a quick lesson by an eager volunteer, he was given the job of piloting a small sailing boat with a Sailability passenger beside him. Although quite confident in the water, Michael had never sailed before. He was absolutely frightened. In the end he managed it well, got the boat and his passenger back safely to dry land, and has been hooked ever since.

Sailability is a program brought to Australia in the 1990s after a local Lillydale resident saw the program in action in the UK. It is a volunteer-run organisation that offers an additional level of support to assist people of all abilities to get into sailing.¹ A group of volunteers purchased some boats and brought them to the water at Docklands, Ballarat, and Hazelwood, providing sailing days and social occasions for those who might not usually have a chance of sailing a boat.

Michael told me that the Lilydale Sailing Club wasn't officially established until 2010—however, sailing days on the lake began in the early 1990s, under the name of "Sailing for Everyone", an offshoot of Sailability. Council began construction of the man-made lake in 1988, as a flood mitigation strategy, and the lake was officially opened to the public in mid-1990. Boats began sailing on the lake, but there was no sailing club—people kept their boats in their driveways and back yards, and brought them to the lake when needed. As monetary support came in from organisations like Rotary, more boats were purchased and there was a need for a place to keep the equipment nearby for easy access to the lake. In about 2006, the Yarra Ranges Council offered the shed and storage area

connected to the Lillydale Lake toilet building. With a space of its own, the Lilydale Sailing Club was formed.

The Lilydale Sailing Club operated under the auspices of Sailability and provided a much-needed service to organisations like Melba Support Services, offering the opportunity for clients to get out on the water and sail. As time went on Scouts, Cubs, and various schools began to use the sailing boats, and the club started to get a name for itself in the local community.



PHOTO: LILYDALE SAILING CLUB

However, it all came to a halt in 2010 when, due to an invasive weed infesting the lake, the lake was drained and for two years the sailing club went into hiatus and almost folded as an organisation. Once the lake was filled again, a new group of members did the hard work of getting the club back into the water, as the original members had moved on. Soon, the number of volunteers increased, along with more demand for Sailability days, and local organisations and schools wanting to use the boats more often. 2015-2016 was a busy time for the club—they would have up to three sailing days a week, and the number of volunteers was exceeded by the number of



PHOTO: MATTHEW GUDZE

people booked to be taken for a sail. From about 2015 to 2019 the club was in its heyday—but that all changed with COVID-19 lockdowns. Once again, the club had to shut down operations.

Michael Taylor became the club president in 2019, and using his business background, brought in some changes and safety protocols that allowed sailing to begin again, albeit slowly, as the COVID-19 restrictions began lifting.

The club building is now quite well set out, with 18 boats sitting on huge racks, along with trailers and the much-needed equipment for the safe lifting of the heavy keels. Michael has a vision of a dedicated and visible building to accentuate the water sports on this beautiful lake, for use by the sailing club and other users such as Canoe Victoria and the Lilydale Radio Yacht club (who share the building facilities). But, for now, a five-metre extension of the club building is on the cards and this will provide more room for training and for larger groups like schools.

Sailing on a warm summer's day might not be something you would think you could do in the Yarra Ranges—but you can, and I find it a beautiful thing to be out there on the water at Lillydale Lake, especially when I'm taking my two young sons around for a spin. They say you can't tip the boats (though I did come close on a windy winter's day this year!) because they are designed for beginners. So, if you get a chance to see the beautiful scene of sails out on the water at Lillydale Lake, come down and ask if you can have a sail. The wonderful volunteers will gladly take you around. I guarantee it will be fun and relaxing, and maybe exhilarating, but not scary.

Matthew Gudze

For more information about how you can become involved, see Lilydale Sailing Club's website or Facebook page: lilydalesailingclub.com.au or [facebook.com/Lillydale.Sailing.Club](https://www.facebook.com/Lillydale.Sailing.Club)

¹ discoversailing.org.au/sailability

Summer in the Yarra Ranges

Summer is here—and the Yarra Ranges is one of the most beautiful areas of the country in which to enjoy it. From indulging in quality food and drink at one of the many wineries, to wandering off the beaten path into the cool green forests, there is so much to experience in the Yarra Ranges.

How about including one of the outings below in your summer plans?

- Pick your own fruit. Have a great day out with the whole family, and take your fruit home to enjoy. Visit one of the many fruit-picking orchards in the area, such as CherryHill Orchards, Jay Berries, or Rayner's Orchard.
- Relax with a pampering afternoon or an overnight stay at one of the boutique spa or accommodation venues.
- Enjoy the vibrant arts scene: experience art, music and theatre at places like the Tarrawarra Museum of Art, Burrinja Cultural Centre or Sherbrooke Gallery.
- Take a trip on the Yarra Valley Railway between Healesville and Yarra Glen. On the first and third Sundays of each month, you can combine your trip with a visit to the Healesville Community Market.
- Visit beautiful Steavenson Falls in Marysville. At night, lights illuminate the spectacular 84-metre waterfall from dusk until 11 pm.
- Explore the area in a different way: hire a bike and ride along some of the many national park trails, or float across the patchwork rural landscape in a hot air balloon.

For more ideas about how to make the most of our beautiful shire this summer, head to visityarravalley.com.au.



PHOTO: PEXAR



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES VIA CNMA.COM

The Gift Economy



Many of us have found ourselves wondering what to do with the barely worn clothes or furniture we no longer use, or the toys our children have outgrown. Or perhaps it's the dozens of empty glass jars or the unused running shoes we bought with the best of intentions during our jam-making and get-fit phases.

Now, there's an easy way to find the best home for these unwanted but still useful items: the Buy Nothing Project provides a way to place these goods directly into the hands of people who most want them.

In 2013, two American friends, Liesl Clark and Rebecca Rockefeller, were frustrated that the beauty of their beachside suburb was constantly marred by piles of rubbish, much of it having washed ashore from the ocean. In a bid to reduce the influx of non-recyclable plastics and at the same time stimulate a gift economy and a stronger community, the friends created a Facebook page entitled Buy Nothing Project (BNP). Their idea took off, and it wasn't long before there were dozens of Facebook pages modelled on the concept. Today, nearly a decade later, there are thousands of such pages, and millions of members throughout the world.

Clark and Rockefeller's vision to create an online neighbourhood space where people can borrow, share and give away unwanted items has grown into a dynamic worldwide movement, and the pair have written a book about the joys of generous giving.¹ The not-for-profit organisation now has chapters in more than 6,500 communities across 44 countries, including Australia, and has expanded beyond Facebook with its own Android and iOS apps.

The aim of the Buy Nothing movement is that the giver should expect nothing in return—everything must be given with no strings attached, and items are not allowed to be exchanged for money or services. However, that doesn't mean there aren't benefits: gift economies reward their participants with intangible rewards like a sense of wellbeing and gratitude, and increased connection between community members. In fact, in addition to improving the planet through waste reduction, one of the main aims of the BNP is that the pooling of resources within neighbourhoods will enable stronger connections between people.

Anyone 18 years and older is welcome to belong to a Buy Nothing group; however, participants are restricted to just one group, within their geographical location. Once in the group, members may offer to give away things they no longer need, or ask for something they want. From household furnishings to garden implements, from books and handmade toys to seedlings and surplus homegrown vegetables, there's something to interest everyone.

To find your local Buy Nothing group online, visit buynothingproject.org/find-a-group. For Mooroolbark residents, the Facebook group can be found at [facebook.com/groups/BNPMoo](https://www.facebook.com/groups/BNPMoo). Whether giving or receiving, you might also find something even more valuable, in the form of new friendships. As the BNP app says, "True wealth is measured by the web of connections formed between people through sharing."

Janet Van Dijk

¹ Clark, Liesl, & Rockefeller, Rebecca. (2020). *The Buy Nothing, Get Everything Plan: Discover the Joy of Spending Less, Sharing More, and Living Generously*. Atria Books.

Labels

Have you ever found a can missing a label? The only way to know what's inside is to open the can. Without doing that, how likely are you to correctly guess the contents? Probably not very likely. This is why labels are so important in a shop. They identify what's on the inside.

Labels are vital to a supermarket, but when it comes to people, labels can be incorrect and downright damaging. Have you heard someone remark, "He's the forgetful one," "She's the slow learner," or "He's the problem child"?

It's easy to label someone without really knowing who they are. Maybe we just saw the colour of their skin, or their bumper sticker, or something else that triggered a label.

Several years ago, I read how our brains are wired to make snap judgments. It may be true, but those snap judgments are a red flag for



PICTURE: PIXABAY/VAOORFIE

relationships—especially if we're not watching our biases.

Paul addressed a similar situation that was taking place in the church at Corinth.

*So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view... Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*¹

The church was a diverse group, but not accepting one another as equals. They were placing labels on each other. And because of this, people were separating themselves into their own groups, be it by race, wealth, status, or culture.

What they failed to recognise is that Christians haven't just had something added or given an upgrade. We are brought into the fullness of who we are, the free and highly favoured children of God. It is the truth of who we are, something we never have to question. And that is how we are to see each other.

So what label will you wear? The label of being a new creation and accepted by the Father? That's a label that cannot fall off.

Adapted from Jeff Broadnax, *Speaking of Life*.

Adapted from "Speaking of Life" a public resource video on the Grace Communion International website. (gci.org/videos/mediaspeaking-of-life/) This magazine is sponsored by Grace Communion Mooroolbark (previously known as Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship), a congregation of Grace Communion International. If you would like more information or pastoral support, our local congregational contact is Matthew Gudze on (03) 9737 0126.

¹ 2 Corinthians 5: 16-17

I once left the house intent on buying a reel for a garden hose and returned with something resembling a carry case for an anti-aircraft gun. "Even chicks need a cordless drill mate," the sales assistant at the hardware store had suggested after hearing me describe the paltry contents of my tool kit. Sadly, that was enough to convince me to purchase a large 'hammer drill' that I've used about three times in the years since.

Had I been a part of what are being described as 'intentional communities,' I could instead have checked my phone app



IMAGES: MOONDANCE/PIXABAY

What's Mine Is Yours

for the availability of the required implement, gone and borrowed it from a local tool lending facility, saving myself the embarrassment, the cost and the space in my garage. Not to mention the landfill that my reckless purchase will one day become, having been used for a total of about three minutes its whole life.

That such an exchange is now feasible is a small example of what Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers describe as Collaborative Consumption, a groundswell of social and economic change that is fundamentally to do with the sharing of resources.

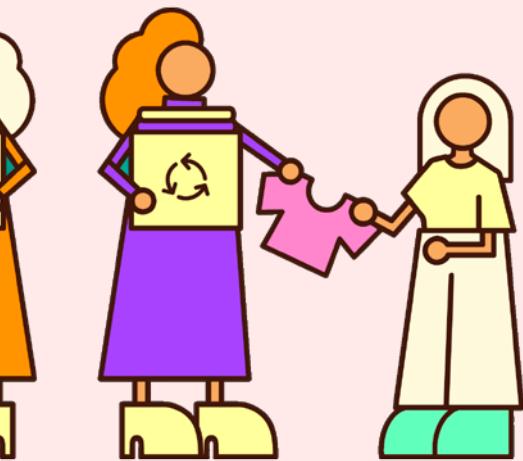
In their book *What's Mine is Yours*¹ they describe a new way of how we consume and do business that they say is taking hold around the world and revolutionising the behaviour of consumers in positive directions.

Collaborative Consumption describes the connections between everything from eBay to community gardens to things like car sharing, music downloads and the bartering of my dentistry skills for your legal advice. It includes things like internet swapping sites, online reuse and recycling facilities, clothing and toy exchanges, sharing of workspaces, companies that connect travellers with locals, and online bartering networks. The list goes on.

"We are going back to pretty old market behaviours—swapping, trading, renting, bartering," says Botsman. "But [these things] are being reinvented through technology on a scale that had never been possible before."



¹ Botsman, R. & Rogers, R. (2010). *What's Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption*. HarperCollins.



the environment or the economy is rapidly being dispelled.

Importantly, Collaborative Consumption provides connection. Social capital refers to things of relational value that can't be measured by GDP and participation in collaborative lifestyles provides an avenue away from the hyper-individualism that has characterised our consumption in the last sixty years.

Sites like Etsy that link buyers with makers of handmade goods, and local farmers markets that have taken off in recent years provide an attractive antidote to the soul sapping nature of mass-produced goods sold in sterile retail warehouses. There is something gratifying in chatting to the bloke who grew his avocados when handing over your cash. Proponents of Collaborative Consumption see such things as addressing our hunger for community.

There are some memorable examples mentioned in the book. CouchSurfing and Airbnb enable travellers not only to save on accommodation but also to have an authentic experience of interaction with locals. Montreal's public bike sharing system makes for convenient commuting that's also good for fitness and obviously does better on the carbon score. The stories of the linking of neighbours who share resources, rides to work, and even join forces to establish shared solar power and pizza ovens are inspiring. Ironically, it's the web that makes it easier for people to come together in this way, producing "extreme neighbourliness [that] is so old fashioned as to seem innovative."

The Rise of Collaborative Consumption

The internet is the key. It provides a platform to enable these actions to cross the line from idealism to convenient reality. The tool-sharing example above is actually possible and workable in many cities around the world now.

Sceptics might be tempted to dismiss this as a temporary fashion or a reaction to the GFC, or a fleeting fancy limited to southern California or Byron Bay, but it is happening on a massive scale and if Botsman and Rogers are right, it represents a seismic shift in how goods and resources are to be exchanged into the future. The good news, according to them, is that this is a ray of hope in getting us off the cycle of consume and waste that so impacts the environment and is ultimately unsustainable.

According to Botsman and Rogers, we are witnessing a shift in focus away from strict ownership to the sharing of resources. They quote *New York Times* journalist Mark Levine who says that Collaborative Consumption is the way of the future:

"Sharing is to ownership what the iPod is to the eight track, what the solar panel is to the coal mine. Sharing is clean, crisp, urbane, postmodern; owning is dull, selfish, timid, backward."

The book is notable for its optimism about where things are going. The authors initially paint a stark picture of the way our individualism and drive for material wealth has taken us. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch—a mass of rubbish the size of Texas that's mostly made up of plastic bags sitting east of Hawaii and off the coast of Japan—is symbolic of this rampant consumption. The same can be said of the astonishing growth of self-storage facilities in the US. As families have shrunk, houses have grown bigger but still they don't manage to contain all our stuff.

But change is in the air. More and more of us are waking up to the fact that all this acquisition has come at the cost of relationships with friends, family, neighbours and the planet. Collaborative Consumption has several advantages. While it doesn't require any obvious commitment to being green, environmental benefit is an important by-product. Secondly, companies who are taking up the opportunities in this area are thriving, especially where they embrace creative design strategies that take into account the life cycle of all resources needed to create a service or product. Botsman and Rogers say the myth of a false choice between



It might be that the proponents of Collaborative Consumption have a more positive view of human nature than is justified as they assess the motivations behind some of these new measures. It's possible we're on the cusp of a revolution but it's hard to tell how far the wonders of the net will take us from our obsession with material goods and our selfish selves. Real community, of the type that we mostly need, is costly, and sometimes involves giving out in a way that offers no hope of getting something back. Much of what is described in *What's Mine is Yours* still feels transactional in nature.

But there's no doubt that this is a refreshing vision of more positive and sustainable consumption that doesn't involve large slabs of guilt or asceticism. It's important that as a society we reimagine ways of producing and consuming that don't trash the planet. There is something noble and life-affirming in establishing connections between the goods and services we consume and the people who provide them. And wherever relationships can be nurtured and communities established, that has to be a positive step away from the hyper-individualism so characteristic of our culture. In as much as Collaborative Consumption achieves any of that, I'm all for it.

Simon Smart
Centre for Public Christianity

Reprinted with permission from The Centre for Public Christianity (publicchristianity.org), 6 December 2010.

Mooroolbark Umbrella Group

Honouring Our Quiet Achievers

Were you there when comedian Frank Woodley came to Mooroolbark in 2015, entertaining and sharing something of his life story with large groups of primary and secondary students throughout the day and a full house in the evening?

Frank was in Mooroolbark as the guest of the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group (MUG), an organisation comprising local organisations and individuals committed to working towards the wellbeing of all in Mooroolbark.

In 2011, MUG commenced its annual Town Forum—an event designed to bring significant guest speakers to Mooroolbark who would inspire, inform, and bring benefit to our town.

The first guest was Detective Senior Sergeant Ron Iddles, at that time the longest-serving homicide detective in Australia. Other guests have included high-profile psychologist and media personality Michael Carr-Gregg, media commentator Maggie Hamilton, paralympian Don Elgin, author and advocate for Aboriginal culture Boori Monty Pryor, former captain of the Australian netball team Sharelle McMahon, and the Commissioner of Emergency Management Australia, Andrew Crisp.



Dr Scott Ayton

On 19 October, this year, resuming the forum after a two-year gap due to COVID-19 restrictions, our guest was Dr Scott Ayton, one of Australia's foremost researchers into dementia, who is the director of the Dementia Centre of Research Excellence at the Florey Institute.

Scott's address was entitled "Loss, Persistence and Hope: Three lessons from researching dementia". Together with the extensive question and answer session that followed, Scott's presentation, like those in the years before him, was of high calibre—informative, reflective and inspiring. His weaving together of personal and professional experience painted a poignant

picture of loss encountered in life—loss that can be transformed into hope through persistence, often against the odds. It was encouraging to hear Scott reference the development of a new Alzheimer's drug which appears to slow the rate of mental decline in sufferers. His was a cautious optimism that if this proves to be a small breakthrough, it will lead to further advances in managing Alzheimer's—the treatment of which has eluded medical research to this point in time.

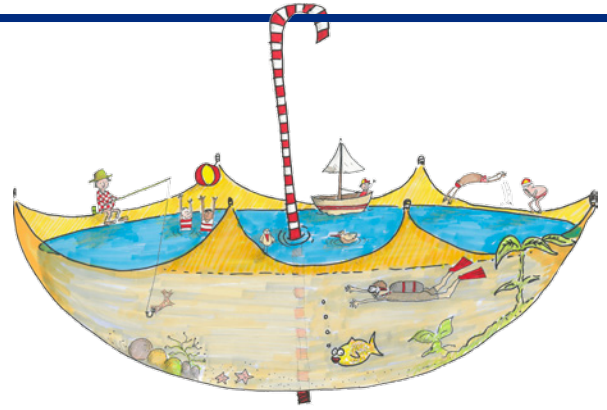
As president of the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group, Randall Bourchier highlighted in his opening remarks that MUG's "best, and most characteristic work is largely unseen and undramatic—as we respond to needs that arise within the community. Working collaboratively to find a way to maintain the SecondBite food delivery to needy Mooroolbark families when we were in danger of losing it, provides one such example."



Since the first forum, MUG has sought to honour people in our community who have served in ways that have frequently gone unnoticed. Including this year, MUG has awarded 34 Quiet Achiever medallions like the one pictured.

The list of Quiet Achievers shows an impressive group of people who have unselfishly and generously served our community by volunteering time, energy, and personal gifting to benefit the common good of Mooroolbark. Many recipients are still serving our community; some have struggled or are struggling with ill-health; others have moved geographically.

This year two awards were made. The first went to Peter Jones, representing the long-time volunteers at the Mooroolbark Miniature Railway.



In introducing Peter, MUG Vice President Neil Mitchell said, "We are blessed and lucky to have the Mooroolbark Miniature Railway... a group that reflects such audacity, passion and commitment in our community."

"When approached about this acknowledgement the first reaction (as with all our nominees) is reticence and a suggestion that we should probably look elsewhere. They certainly don't look for kudos and recognition. They don't see themselves as 'out of the ordinary' or volunteering in areas of great import. But this team has built and run the miniature railway for 40 years. There are generations of locals whose faces light up as they recall picnics and train rides at Kiloran Park."

"We at the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group are delighted that you are here in our community. We thank you for your contribution and we publicly acknowledge you as Quiet Achievers."

MUG Secretary Matt Gudze then introduced Yolande Pickett.

"It is my absolute pleasure to give this Quiet Achiever award to someone who I have worked with in the community," said Matt. "I am sure I am not overstating it, but the recipient is someone who has been an integral part in the flourishing of the Mooroolbark community for the last 10 years and more. Yolande operates with joy, with ideas just bursting over and she brings so many people together to achieve a goal... She is an amazing multitasker, a wonderful connector of people, and [referring to Yolande's contribution to our annual festival, Celebrate Mooroolbark] in the first few years, with a child on a blanket on the floor during our meetings in this very building."

"Her role with Celebrate Mooroolbark was the catalyst to further opportunities in the area... She has since had roles with council, coordinating local art instalments in the area, with the Mooroolbark Traders group and numerous other roles."

Communities are dynamic organisms. Thriving communities depend on organisations and individuals committed to bringing wellbeing to their community. Thank you to the diversity of organisations active in Mooroolbark which benefit us in unique ways!

Take a moment to think about how you might become involved in our community. And go for it! The research findings are unanimous—volunteering your time and skills not only brings benefit and wellbeing to the community, but significantly increases the personal wellbeing of those who volunteer.

Randall Bourchier

Drawing from Life

Most of us know the feeling of just needing to relax and unwind at the end of a hard day or week. For Mooroolbark father-of-three Paul Woods, that relaxation takes the form of seeing the lighter side of life through the medium of cartoons.

Paul works as a police officer, and draws cartoons as a hobby. He had wanted to be a police officer since childhood, but before beginning his policing career he took the advice of friends and decided to see the world first. After finishing high school, he studied film and television production at university, then travelled to London, where he stayed for seven years. He worked in various roles for a production company, working his way up to television cameraman. As part of that job he travelled all over the world, mostly covering sporting events like sailing, cycling, and Formula One. He has visited every continent except Antarctica, but said that travelling sounds a lot more glamorous than it really is. "There were a lot of early mornings, a lot of time spent at airports. It was really hard work, and long days."



Paul and his son Mitchell

Paul met his Australian-born wife Elizabeth in London, and together they returned home to Australia about fourteen years ago. After his many years of covering sporting events, it made sense to Paul to live in Melbourne, which is the sporting capital of Australia and also his wife's home town.

Paul was accepted into the police force almost 12 years ago, and hasn't looked back. Despite having no regrets about his choice of career, Paul admits that policing can be stressful, with tiring shift work and many unpleasant encounters on the job. "Victoria Police have very good welfare systems in place and they do their best to look after their people," said Paul. "But at the end of the day you can't help but be affected—we're not robots."

Maintaining a good work/life balance is important for Paul, and that's where his artwork comes in. "Drawing and cartooning is something that I have used as an outlet to try to switch off, to use a different part of my brain and look at the world through another lens," he said.

Paul has enjoyed drawing since childhood, and has fond memories of reading his dad's

Daily Telegraph when he was growing up in New South Wales. "I'd always flip to the funny pages and read the cartoons." In high school, Paul created cartoons to try to make his friends laugh, and when he was about 16, his cartoons were regularly published in a local Port Macquarie newspaper under the title "Fish Tales." He has always signed his cartoons "Woody", the nickname he has been known by since childhood. "Even my wife even calls me Woody," he laughed.

While Paul was living in London, he submitted his cartoons to the *Big Issue*, the magazine that is sold on the streets by people who are disadvantaged and marginalised.¹ Needing a name for the cartoons, Paul came up with "Insert Brain Here", because many of his cartoon characters are "not too bright". One of the sellers of the *Big Issue* was regularly stationed at the end of Paul's road, and Paul often took a moment to literally get feedback on his cartoons from "the man on the street". However, he never took the opportunity to tell him that he was the creator of the cartoons they discussed. "I was going to tell him one day, one of the last days before I left London, but he wasn't there."

To create his single-panel cartoons, Paul uses techniques he describes as "old school". The original sketch is done with pencil and paper in black and white, then the image is scanned into a computer, where Paul uses Photoshop to finish the colouring and shading. For ideas, Paul literally draws from his own life experiences—he often tucks away observations about people and situations in his memory for future use. "My children certainly give me a lot of material, things they say and things they do," said Paul. The family's staffy Winston—"who's like our first child"—also gives Paul inspiration.

Paul's cartoons currently appear in seven newspapers around Australia, as well as in some free publications. While Paul might sometimes dream about being able to retire from his job and concentrate on cartooning, he recognises that this is probably unrealistic. He has noticed that some newspapers no longer even publish cartoons. "It seems to be a bit of a dying art," he said. He also enjoys his police work, and is hoping to advance to the role of senior sergeant.

Paul, Elizabeth and their three sons—Mitchell, 5, Harvey, 2, and baby Nathan—are happily settled in Mooroolbark, which Paul describes as "our forever home." Paul said, "I love it out here because it still has that country feel,

but if you want to go into the city, it's not far away. It has a real community feel."

Janet Van Dijk

¹ <https://thebigissue.org.au/>

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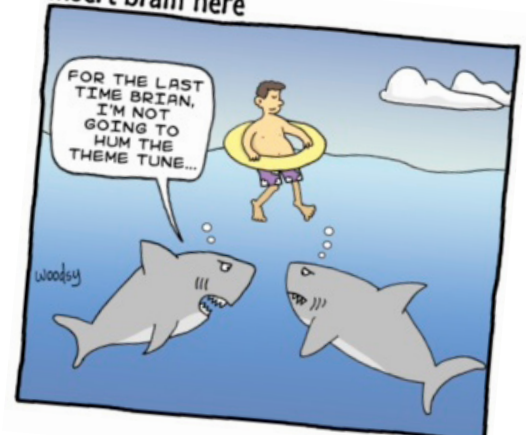
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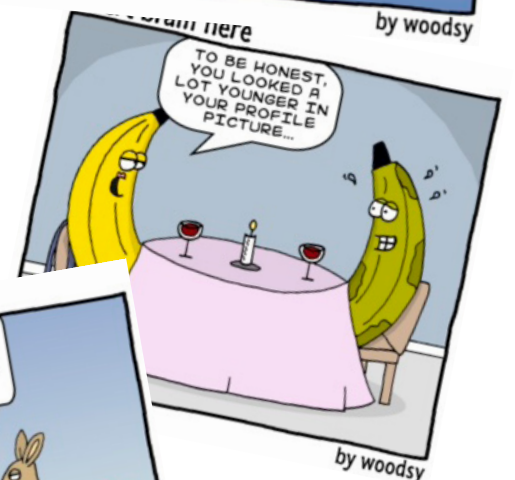


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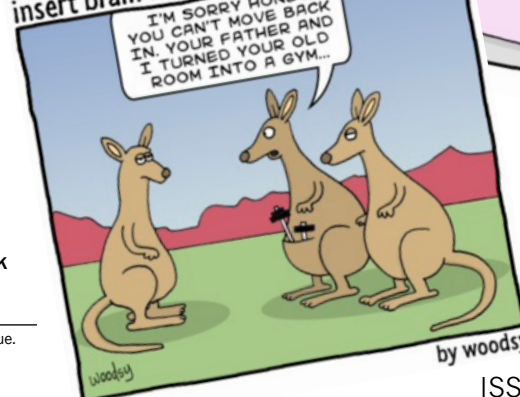


by woody



by woody

insert brain here



by woody



What's On ... at Your Library

Big Summer Read

Your Library is participating in the Big Summer Read, a summer reading competition that will run state wide from 1 December – 31 January for children and teens aged 0-18 years. All you need to do is read and log 10 books during December and January—how easy is that!

1. Register online or at your local public library
2. Borrow library books (including ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, or comics) and start reading
3. Read and log a minimum of 10 books to go in the prize draw!

Upon completing the program, you will be entered into the draw to win a state-wide prize. There are three age-based categories for prizes, with the winner in the 0-8 years and 9-12 years categories each winning a \$250 Readings gift voucher, and the winner of the 13-18 years category receiving a \$500 Readings gift voucher. You can find out more about the program from the Public Libraries Victoria website (plv.beanstack.org/reader365) or visit the team at Mooroolbark Library who can assist signing up your family. Paper registration is also available upon request.

Regular Events

There is also a range of exciting events that will be running in 2023! Here is just a taste of some of our regular monthly events that are free to attend. Bookings are essential, so be sure to call the team on 9800 6480 or visit events.yourlibrary.com.au to book your spot.

Board Game Evening—Last Tuesday of the month

Come and join us at Mooroolbark Library for a fun-filled night of gaming! Meet people, learn how to play new games and celebrate all that tabletop gaming has to offer. Feel free to bring your own games along or play the ones provided.

Starting Tuesday 31 January, 7 pm, Mooroolbark Library, 7 Station Street.

Colouring For Adults—Second Friday of the month

Relax and join others in colouring in some lovely designs.

Starting Friday 10 February, 2 pm, Mooroolbark Library, 7 Station Street.

Crochet Afternoon—First Wednesday of the month

Have you ever wanted to learn how to crochet? Want to work on your current projects in a fun, social environment? Then join us at Mooroolbark Library as Beth from Carmah Designs assists with all your crocheting needs.

Starting Wednesday 1 February, 2 pm, Mooroolbark Library, 7 Station Street.

Angus Cooke, Team Leader

On behalf of the Mooroolbark Library team: Hanna, Isabell, Jeanette, Margaret & Orielle

Popular Titles

Enjoy a great selection of the latest books at Your Library. To place a free reservation on any of these titles, visit our website yourlibrary.com.au/catalogue.



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Lions Club

of Croydon-Mooroolbark

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Living Today in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges

Mooroolbark
Denture Clinic

9726 7284

Making Smiles Come to Life

proudly supporting
Living Today in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir returns to Mooroolbark Community Centre

In a Christmas tradition for Mooroolbark Community Centre, the acclaimed Melbourne Welsh Male Choir returns to ring in the festive season with its booming 50-voice ensemble.

The choir delivers a world-class concert of musical hits, spiritual melodies and Welsh repertoire in four-part harmony. The Melbourne Welsh Male Choir has toured the world, including performing with Tom Jones and Dame Gwyneth Jones at Wales' own Cardiff Arms Park.

Formed in 1984, the choir has grown from a small group of enthusiastic singers into one of Australia's most acclaimed male choirs, and the group is looking forward to revisiting Mooroolbark Community Centre for this very special Christmas event. The choir's musical director, David Ashton-Smith, is well known in the Melbourne music scene and in 2016 was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to music. A classically trained singer, David rose to become principal baritone during his nine years with the English National Opera. He has performed and taught in many institutions since his return to Australia and brings a wealth of experience to his role with the choir.

The choir is usually busy with around 8-10 performances each year, including performing at major city venues such as Hamer Hall, Melbourne Recital Centre and Melbourne Town Hall, as well as country venues such as Geelong's Basilica and Bendigo's Ulumbarra Theatre.

The choir's president, Kevin Seerup, said, "We are a group of men of varying ages and backgrounds who share a love of singing in the Welsh choral tradition; the quality of the singing we produce for our audiences is critical and we derive immense pleasure from the feedback we get. What is also critical is the overall health benefits that singing with a great bunch of blokes engenders."



David Ashton-Smith, OAM, is the choir's musical director.

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir Christmas Concert

Mooroolbark Community Centre
125 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark
Saturday 17 December 11 am & 3 pm
Tickets: \$25, concession \$22
www.culturetracks.info or phone 1300 368 333
Tickets may also be purchased in person,
Wednesday to Sunday 12 pm-4 pm,
at Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, 35-37 Castella Street, Lilydale.

The choir honours its Welsh roots by singing at least 25 per cent of its repertoire in the Welsh language, Europe's oldest living language. While maintaining the Welsh choral singing tradition the Melbourne Welsh Choir created its own unique Australian sound and style, and the reviews have been glowing. Patron Alwyn Humphreys described the choir as "the best Welsh choir heard outside of Wales", and the Herald Sun said, "They are nothing short of majestic. Their sound is as smooth as the green valleys of Wales."

Marketing and Communications
Yarra Ranges Council

Yarra Ranges is a Region of Choice for Employers

With local businesses across all industries needing staff, Yarra Ranges Council is celebrating all the fantastic reasons to work right here.

Yarra Ranges Council Mayor, Jim Child, said the 'Region of Choice' campaign would help businesses draw in new staff, and help connect job seekers with engaging, interesting, and fulfilling careers in one of the most visited regions of Victoria.

"We know our businesses need more staff across all industries, which is why council is excited to lead the way in showcasing everything the region

offers to jobseekers," Cr Child said. "We have value-driven employers who take care of their staff, opportunities for careers in growing industries from tourism to health, manufacturing to the creative arts, construction to retail. And it is all right here, on Melbourne's doorstep."

"Why would you work anywhere else?"

And while Yarra Ranges might be better known for its wineries and agribusinesses, there are a multitude of exciting businesses operating in our urban areas of Mooroolbark, Lilydale and Kilsyth.

For Geoff Earney, managing Director of Methven Real Estate and president of Mooroolbark Traders and Community Group, one of the best things about working in Mooroolbark is that sense of community. "It's a small community; it's still got that community feel to it," Mr Earney said. "I've been in the town for 50 years and I think it's a great town... It's one of those places, it is what you make it."

Whether you're working at one of our world-leading manufacturers, kicking career goals in vital services like health or education or at an up-and-coming boutique or bar, there's plenty of places for a knock-off toast with friends, a delicious bite to eat or even a spot of culture.

Forget the crowds, queues and closed-in spaces of big shopping centres and instead soak up the charm of your local main street, which has all the convenience without the hassle or hustle of the city.

Check out Yarra Ranges JobLink, the free, local employment portal, and find your reason to work in Yarra Ranges: joblink.yarraranges.vic.gov.au.

Customer and Communications Department
Yarra Ranges Council



Geoff Earney, Managing Director of Methven Real Estate, enjoys the sense of community that comes with working in Mooroolbark.

Community Events Calendar

Monday evenings March to November	Scottish Country Dancing: Mondays 8:00 pm (except public holidays). Beginners and experienced. Minimal charges. Croydon Senior Citizens Hall, cnr Mt Dandenong Rd & Civic Square. 9725 9074. Final date for 2022 is 28 November; resumes March 2023.
Tuesdays & Thursdays	Mooroolbark Men's Shed: 9 am-2 pm. Cnr Ellen Road & Croydondale Drive, Mooroolbark. For more information please contact President Ken Reid on 0493 084 646.
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.
Monday mornings Wednesday evenings	Free English Classes: at St Peter Julian's Church, 240 Hull Road, Mooroolbark Call Jan Reilly on 0414 763 801 for bookings.
Thursdays during school term	Music for Kids: 0-5 years. St Margaret's Uniting Church hall. 9:45 am. Morning tea and playtime included. \$10 per session per family. Contact Nancy on 0413 389 441.
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.
Friday nights during school term	Fridays@FrontlineYouth: LifeGroups, Live Nights and Socials for high school-aged youth. 7:30-9:30 pm. Life Ministry Church. Details: phone 9726 8111 or lmc.org.au.
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 lmc.org.au.
Every second Friday	People's Pantry: Three-course takeaway meal for the homeless and lonely, hosted by Grace Communion Mooroolbark. 6-6:20 pm at St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Rd. Contact Barbara: 0417 381 542. Last meal for 2022 is 9 December; resumes 20 January 2023.
4 th Sunday each month, except December	Mooroolbark Miniature Railway: Kiloran Park, Hawthory Road. Open 4th Sunday of each month, except December. To book visit our website https://mmr.org.au or contact info@mmr.org.au
1 December- 25 February	Climate Change Exhibitions: Burringa Climate Change Biennale 2022. Original First Nations installation at Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, Lilydale. Free. Wednesday-Sunday 12 pm-4 pm.
3 December	Barry Morgan's World of Organs: Leave your worries at the door! Barry rose to fame after his appearance on ABC's "Spicks & Specs". The Memo, Maroondah Hwy, Healesville. Tickets 1300 368 333 or culturetracks.info .
3 December-17 December	Free DIY Santa Photos! Come visit our beautiful set up in Shop 16 Mooroolbark Terrace to take your Santa photos for free! BYO camera/phone. Various times and dates: see mooroolbark.vic.au/Christmas2022 for more information.
9 December	CANCELLED: Community Carols. Unfortunately, the 2022 Mooroolbark Community Carols at Hookey Park have had to be cancelled: Enquiries: 0425 809 021.
11 December	LMC Carols Night: Sunday 11 December 7 pm-9 pm: a joyful night of carols, a nativity and an encouraging message. Oxley Stadium lawn, Old Melbourne Rd, Chirnside Park.
17 December	Melbourne Welsh Male Choir rings in the festive season with its booming 50-voice ensemble. 11 am & 3 pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Tickets 1300 368 333 or culturetracks.info
18 December	Discovery Church Christmas Carols: 3 pm & 6 pm, 89 Monbulk Rd, Mount Evelyn. discoverychurch.com.au
12-24 December	Annual Life Ministry Church Christmas Light & Sound Show: Showing nightly 9-11 pm Monday 12 to Saturday 24 December at Oxley Stadium, Old Melbourne Rd, Chirnside Park.
24 December	River Valley Church: Christmas Eve service, 6 pm. Come at 5:30 for a sausage sizzle and kids' obstacle course. Millwarra Community Centre, Cavanagh Road, Millgrove.
5 January- 29 January	NGV On Tour - Let's Make Art! School Holiday Free Art: Children and families can enjoy free art activities at Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, Lilydale. Wednesday-Sunday 12 pm-4 pm.
18-19 March 2023	Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival: Hookey Park and surrounds. Come and celebrate everything Mooroolbark has to offer at our low-cost, family friendly festival. Entertainment, stalls, kids' activities and more! Contact chair@celebratemooroolbark.com .
19 March 2023	Yarra Valley Wool and Handicraft Show: Mooroolbark Community Centre. The wool and handicraft show is back, with lots of wool and craft related stands, fashion parade, competitions and more! Contact stalls@celebratemooroolbark.com .

Christmas Church Services, 25 December 2022

9:30 am	Grace Communion Mooroolbark Christmas Day Service: 9:30 am, Mooroolbark Community Centre. 45-minute service with carols, communion and message. mooroolbark.gci.org.au
9:30 am	Discovery Church: 9:30 am, 89 Monbulk Rd, Mount Evelyn. discoverychurch.com.au
10:00 am	Life Ministry Church Christmas Day Service: 10:00 am, 15-49 Old Melbourne Rd, Chirnside Park.

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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 0407 110 051 or by email at editor@livingtoday.org.au

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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.