

LIVING TODAY

IN MOOROOLBARK/YARRA RANGES

NO. 44 SEPTEMBER 2013



Highest Award for Cub Scouts

Locals Jason Kennedy and Emily Russo earned the Grey Wolf Award

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11,500 Free Copies Distributed Throughout Mooroolbark & District

COMMUNITY

– From Consumer To Citizen!

Let's each one of us commit to being involved in community – “playing the game” – rather than being one more spectator; one of the 30,000 people who need the exercise turning up to watch 36 who don't!

I appreciated being one of two township representatives chosen by the shire to attend a recent conference entitled *The Future of Communities – Power to the People* hosted by the Municipal Association of Victoria.¹

Peter Kenyon from The Bank of I.D.E.A.S.² is a passionate advocate of community enrichment through participation. His wry comment that community engagement is a bit like a football match, where 30,000 people who need the exercise turn up to watch 36 who don't, can sum up the apathy that some of us can show towards being active within our communities!

But, lest you think that this conference grovelled in the negative, the constantly repeated message that came through the sharing of experience and stories emphasised the importance of “appreciative inquiry” – an approach that seeks to identify community positives and build on those, rather than accentuate the negatives through a “problem solving” approach.

For instance, Peter Kenyon's website notes: “In every community something works. Instead of asking ‘what's wrong, and how to fix it’, ask – ‘what's worked, and how do we get more of it?’ It generates energy and creativity.”³

During our two days together, many presenters told stories about communities working together to bring remarkable turn-arounds when facing problems of survival: reversals that were accomplished through conversations and growing relationships – dwelling not on *deficiencies, needs and problems* but on keeping a creative focus

on resources, capacities, strengths and aspirations.

Peter noted, “Meaningful and lasting community change always originates from within, and local residents in that community are the best experts on how to activate that change. Community residents act responsibly when they care, and support what they create. Building and nourishing relationships is at the core of building healthy and inclusive communities.”

Peter concluded that a key factor in the strength of a community lies in “residents ... able to contribute their abilities and assets to the wellbeing of their community. Every single person has capacities, abilities, gifts and ideas, and living a good life depends on whether those capacities can be used, abilities expressed, gifts given and ideas shared.”

For all of us, the challenge is: “Will I be a consumer or a citizen?”

Presenter Gilbert Rochecouste⁴ emphasised the essential importance of a community-owned vision by insisting on the radical interconnection of personal and community resilience especially at a time in our history when people are questioning the legitimacy of church, business and government. He claimed that the greatest emerging worldwide trend currently is “relocalising” – the move toward reclaiming public spaces, retro-fitting local shopping strips, rebuilding local commerce in helping create a sustainable and vibrant sense of place.⁵

Gilbert emphasised that local traders are the best place makers, because they have

the capacity to enliven our streets with small businesses that are dynamic, sometimes quirky, individual and attractive.

Gilbert claimed that local traders are in a position to contribute to local well-being economically because for every \$10 earned, \$7 is returned to the local economy – compared with about \$3 by supermarket chains and multi-national franchises.

Sadly, the largest current gathering places in the world are shopping malls, but if the trend to relocalising continues we may see a reversal – and a return to life enjoyed together in our townships.

Beauty of place and “quirky” local businesses – including opportunities for youth and immigrant community enterprises – have the potential to help make shopping strips interesting, which in turn attracts more people. More people create a greater ‘buzz’ around town along with greater personal security and less need for security cameras.

Presenter after presenter told stories from Australia and around the world of communities that with a combination of courage and compassion had worked together with local business (“doing good is good for business”) to reverse community hopelessness and despair.

One gave the example of Benalla, where the local traders struggling with the negative impact of the freeway bypass worked together to respond to community aspirations in creative ways – one of which was the launch of the successful ‘If you can't get to Paris, try Benalla’ campaign.

After conducting a business retention and expansion survey and identifying reasons for retail leakage, the council and the Benalla Business Network decided to conduct a vibrant, ‘in your face’ shop local campaign. Three major Benalla employers are French and the streetscape has a provincial feel. The playground rocket was likened to the Eiffel Tower and a cheeky campaign was developed swathed in hot pink.⁶

Benalla provides a great example of the importance of the entire community coming

1 <http://www.mav.asn.au/events/Pages/future-of-communities-power-to-people-30042013.aspx> for information and some material presented at the Conference

2 The Bank of I.D.E.A.S. is motivated by two passions:

- the development of healthy, inclusive, sustainable and enterprising communities and local economies; and
- the active participation and leadership by young men and women in the creation of such communities and economies.

The Bank of I.D.E.A.S. operates from the basic assumption that communities do not develop from the ‘top down’ or from ‘the outside in’. It believes that communities need to build from ‘the inside out’, and for their residents to invest themselves, ideas, assets, capabilities and resources in the process. http://www.bankofideas.com.au/about_frames.html

3 All quotes from Bank of I.D.E.A.S. website

4 <http://www.villagewell.org/team> The Projects link at this site also provides examples of Melbourne place making projects.

5 Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Put simply, it involves looking at, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work and play in a particular space, to discover their needs and aspirations. This information is then used to create a common vision for that place. The vision can evolve quickly into an implementation strategy, beginning with small-scale, do-able improvements that can immediately bring benefits to public spaces and the people who use them. http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/ Placemaking capitalises on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. Another useful definition is at: <http://www.villagewell.org/page/placemaking>

6 http://www.business.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/7102/self_help_module15_cooperative_marketing_20091203.pdf p.21



Presenter Jim Diers from the University of Washington urged conference-goers to bring members of communities together around shared interests

together to develop and own a shared vision based on local aspirations. Working together produces benefit for all. Gilbert mentioned that if we start with the needs and aspirations of people and their desires about their place, we end up with “people and place”, but it has to be a process of transformation according to shared goals and aspirations, rather than something “done” to a place.

One of the presenters – Jim Diers from Seattle – mentioned that “most people are already organised. Bring them together around a shared interest.”⁷ His comments reminded me of the formation of the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group (MUG) which came into being as a result of community organisations looking for ways to work better together for the benefit of all in Mooroolbark.

There is great potential for future benefit for Mooroolbark as the member organisations of MUG partner with local traders and other organisations in developing a compelling vision and plan for our township that goes beyond serving the limited needs of one group – and develops instead as a plan that can benefit all. Fortunately, through already initiated community processes, spasmodic change is under way, for example: planning for the redevelopment of the station precinct; the Brice Avenue streetscape; the redevelopment of Hookey Park; and growing community participation in gatherings such as Celebrate Mooroolbark, the community carols and twilight picnic, annual town forum, presentation of Quiet Achiever Awards, the graffiti clean-up, the annual planting day, and Anzac Day ceremonies.

Already the partnering of community and business extends to partnering with government – particularly local government. Traditionally, the shire has been organised around differences in function, but according to Jim Diers, agencies such as the shire should have much more of a place-based focus, which at the SYR is slowly beginning with the employment of suitable people gifted with skills to interface better with the local community. The sending of two community representatives to this very conference demonstrates that

the shire is interested in stronger partnerships with the grassroots of community.

As communities, businesses and governments work together, a sample of some of the questions that inevitably arise are: “How can we make and enhance places for people to connect, to sit, to watch, to celebrate?” “How can we help to foster vibrancy in our township beyond traditional business hours?” “How can traders be encouraged to move beyond the ‘it’s all about me’ attitude so that their businesses will benefit the community more and more?” And to be fair: “How do we all move on from the community-destructive focus on ‘what’s good for me?’” “How do we make more places of beauty in our towns where people can rest, contemplate, do nothing?”

Peter Kenyon advocated some useful principles for the interdependent cooperation of all of us with business – and business with us – to help stimulate development and jobs at a local level:

- Work to attract new entrepreneurs, enterprises and industry: 60-80% of new employment comes from existing businesses doing better.
- Support and grow local businesses. Local government: more “red carpet” than “red tape”. Residents: shop local. Businesses: “plug the leaks” where shoppers have no choice but to go elsewhere.
- Attract new people to our community and retain those we have.
- Stimulate tourism through beauty and interest – market the community – “be idea and opportunity obsessive”.
- Help introduce local alternative economies – such as Time Bank, a program implemented in New Zealand, which enables locals to swap time or other resources among themselves.

I’d like to conclude with some kudos for the Bendigo Bank. Their current CEO, Chris D’Arauge, spoke about the growing numbers of bank-community partnerships. This year the bank celebrated the return of \$100 million back to local communities since its 1998 inception, in a decade when 2000 local bank

branches closed across Australia with little thought about the social impact.⁸

We should commend the Bendigo Bank for its banking model: 50% of profits go to the bank and of the remaining 50%, 20% is distributed to shareholders and a very significant 80% is returned to the community.

The ways in which the bank has partnered with the community have also changed – evolving from the basic early model of providing financial help to sporting clubs and community groups, to looking for ways to help the wider community through providing community buses or halls, to looking for ways to partner in the provision of whole-community needs such as health services, community hubs and programs, learning centres and youth initiatives.

In addition, the bank has increasingly required applicants for funding to demonstrate the support of other community groups in partnership – an initiative that helps build community connection whilst providing financial support.

We’re fortunate in Mooroolbark to already have so many initiatives that help to promote healthy, active community!

To refer back to the football analogy used early in the article – let’s each one of us commit to being involved in community – “playing the game” – rather than being one more spectator; one of the 30,000 people who need the exercise turning up to watch 36 who don’t!



Randall Bouchier

⁸ Then-CEO Rob Hunt is to be commended for his brave, forward-looking decision to open community partnering branches when his larger competitors were closing branches.

GLOBAL EDUCATION

AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM AT MOOROOLBARK EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL

When the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development stipulated that from 2015 every prep child must be learning a second language, it provoked much discussion at Mooroolbark East Primary School.

The general consensus was that previous language programs the staff had participated in had left much to be desired. Staff pointed to the fact that while such previous programs had generally offered some limited outcomes such as a small second-language vocabulary, the ability to count to ten and a minimal 'taste' of the relevant culture – usually through food and festivals – MEPS was looking for much more. Whilst it was agreed that close connections with one particular culture was an important part of a language program, much more was needed.

It was felt that an effective language program should offer a deeper understanding of our place in the world. It should allow children to learn about a variety of cultures, different lifestyles and different belief systems. It should also demonstrate that while people are different from one another, that does not mean that they are any better or any worse. Such topics as global citizenship, conflict resolution, paths to reconciliation and ways to build peace should also be studied. In particular, assimilation, racism and discrimination should be addressed.

The broad goal for global education is to help our younger generation to become true global citizens by improving their capacity to understand and effectively relate to the changing world around them – and as a result, to live happily and successfully in that world.

With this background, and supported by the school council and parents, MEPS set about researching the possibility of developing such a program.

Through an Asian Education Foundation grant, MEPS had already established a sister-school relationship in Kunshan, China. The foundation had funded a visit to Kunshan by principal Ms Debbie Nelsson and two other staff members. A close relationship with this school was quickly established. With further support from the founder, a document titled "The Global Classroom" was produced. The subsequent MEPS curriculum proposal has been based on that document.

A further grant provided for four more staff to visit last year. One of those staff members was Mr Matt Mulcahy, who is currently leading the program in the school.



With the help of a translator, Principal Zhou of Chenbei school and Ms Nelsson sign a memorandum of understanding

He takes each class once per week. The class teacher participates in the program and is encouraged to extend and assimilate the information received into other curriculum areas.

Matt has seen much of the world through his travels as a professional cricketer and through his previous job in the field of financial analysis. He has a strong passion for helping our children learn about today's world in a much deeper and more discerning way. Debbie and Matt talk about developing the curriculum as they go, but already a significant array of programs, class projects and other resources have been gathered.

This initiative is developing very quickly. As this article goes to print the school is anticipating a visit from 17 grades 5-6 children and two teachers from Kunshan. The visitors will be offered home stay with school families and will be given many opportunities to come to better understand our world and our culture over their two-week stay.

In the September school holidays, 14 teachers from MEPS will pay their own way to visit their sister school in China and to see a little of the local area.

Ms Nelsson points out that to this stage, the school and its community have not had to contribute to any costs relating to this program. The first outlay for the school will centre around giving their visitors a variety of local experiences during their stay in Mooroolbark.

Accompanying the 14 staff members from MEPS will be 15 teachers from four other schools in the Yarra Ranges Shire. These schools have all heard about this innovative program and are keen to find out more about it. Next year MEPS plans to send 20 local students to Kunshan.

When this project was in its earliest stages the school produced a newsletter to help everyone in the school community catch the vision of what was being proposed. That newsletter was subsequently added to the prime minister's website as an exemplar model for school engaging with Asia.

In addition to all of this, MEPS is also sponsoring a small orphanage in Cambodia. This is a private arrangement stemming from a staff member's direct contact. Last year the school raised sufficient funds to provide two sets of school uniforms for each of the 16 children in the orphanage. The children were very excited to be wearing school uniforms for the first time.

We congratulate MEPS on this exciting and innovative approach to ensuring that our young people are being given such a rich opportunity to truly become 'world citizens' in the years ahead. We look forward to hearing about further developments.

Doug Lewis

A CHANCE TO HELP

A free day of fun, relaxation and pampering is being planned for people caring for someone with a disability or medical condition. Carers will be offered a variety of free therapies and activities such as yoga, relaxation, meditation, massage, facials, manicures, pedicures, and card making, and will also receive a goodie bag with random giveaways.

Volunteers are needed to help give these hardworking carers a fantastic day.

**THIS DAY WILL BE HELD ON
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 17TH, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
AT IRABINA IN BAYSWATER.**

**IF YOU ARE ABLE TO OFFER YOUR TIME, GOODS, SERVICES OR A FINANCIAL DONATION,
PLEASE EMAIL LISA CURRIE AT LISA@RIPPLEKINDNESS.ORG**

Community Thanks To a Much Appreciated 'Quiet Achiever'



As a young man growing up in England, Terry Charity probably had no idea that he would spend his retirement years in Australia, playing a very active role in the Mooroolbark Senior Citizens Club!

Terry Charity was demobbed from his position as Orderly Room Corporal at the Royal Air Force School of Administration, Bircham Newton, Norfolk at the age of 21. He was then employed in clerical, administrative and supervisory duties in the construction industry until his retirement at age 65. Following his retirement (now 15 years ago) Terry and his wife Jean put into place their plan to migrate to Australia. They chose Melbourne as their destination because their daughter Karen and her family, and also Jean's sister, were already well established here. Looking back, Terry and Jean reflect on the mixed feelings they experienced and the apprehension they felt on leaving friends and family in England and their desire to work towards making new social contacts here.

On arrival they immediately joined the Mooroolbark Senior Citizens Club, where they soon became involved in a number of activities including exercise and dance classes. This was the beginning of a long and very active association with the club which has seen Terry accept the position of treasurer for four years and then president for the last six years. He has also spent much of these 15 years running the very popular exercise and dance classes.

In 2012 Terry received the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group's award as a "Quiet Achiever" for his dedicated service to the club. Terry looks back with much pleasure at the great times they have had, the many close friends they have made and the significant developments that have occurred in the life of the club. He says he has "very much enjoyed the journey." He is most appreciative of the wonderful support from committee members over the years – and especially the encouragement and help of his wife Jean – in making this all possible. Commenting on Terry's contribution to club life, committee member Lesley Carter says, "Terry is a remarkably easy-going man who has been an outstanding president. He is highly appreciated by all at the club." Kath Elsworth adds, "Terry is a highly efficient administrator who has initiated many new developments at the club and is always there to attend to the countless details that arise. He is a most pleasant man to know and to work with."

Having now turned 80 years of age and celebrating 58 years of marriage, Terry feels that it is time for both he and Jean to step back a little and take more time for themselves – perhaps including a trip back to England. Terry now plans to step down from the president's role, but both he and Jean will continue to be involved with and support the club.

We thank Terry and Jean very much for their dedicated service to the many local seniors who have participated in the club's activities over those years, and we wish them the very best of health and much happiness in the years ahead.

Doug Lewis



celebrate mooroolbark

2014 – Saturday, March 22

A Mad Hatter's Tea Party...

Have you ever been to one? That is the theme for our next Celebrate Mooroolbark festival. We will have a Mad Hatters' parade and a creative hat competition, and the usual competitions for schools and on Facebook. Come and "find Alice" on the day. Put this date in your diary and be there ...

We are asking local young people to design a special poster for this event. There will be more details on our website once our sponsorship is finalised.

The guiding principle of the festival is to provide a low-cost day out for families – and we seek through sponsorship to minimise the costs on the day and encourage groups to put on free or low-cost activities for children and families. This has come from the support of our local businesses and organisations, with both cash and 'in kind' sponsorship. We are looking for partnerships with new participants in the festival to make it bigger and better. Maybe your business, school or group would like to participate in the marketplace or get involved in the festival parade. I would love to mention all our partners, but there are around 120 that help make the day happen. All that I can say on behalf of the community is 'thank you'.

And as usual, we plan to celebrate the talents of our community with a talent quest on the Friday night

(March 21). If you can sing or dance or play an instrument, or can entertain an audience, why not enter the talent quest with the opportunity to win cash prizes? **Entry in the quest is free**, with two categories – Under 16 and Open, with first, second and third prizes as well as a "people's choice".

We draw together the different community groups that make up Mooroolbark to showcase the local organisations and businesses and to promote the community and ourselves. Although there are many groups involved, there is always room for more, and the day offers an opportunity to connect with the locals. We are seeking local acts for the community stage or as roving performers, and groups to provide family-friendly activities or affordable food. If you are part of a group, why not consider how you can use the festival to gain more recruits or to gain more exposure on the local scene. If you are short of ideas, talk to us and we can show you ways to get involved.

We are looking for people and groups to be involved both on the day and to help organise the festival. **Contact us on celebratemooroolbark@gmail.com or 0435 362 725, or follow us on Facebook.**

■ **Andrew Lang**
Festival Chairperson





Mii 'O' My



With a background in hospitality, co-owner Nikki enjoys making coffee for customers



Bree Garthwaite enjoys being part of the Mooroolbark shopping precinct and getting to know local shoppers

The owners of a new children's clothing boutique in Brice Avenue chose Mooroolbark as the home for their new shop because they love the warm, almost-country-town atmosphere of the area. Nikki Jans and her business partner Bree Garthwaite opened Mii 'O' My several months ago with the aim of creating the type of store *they* would like to shop in.

As a result, their boutique is a bright cheerful space with racks of designer clothes, a children's play area and several small tables where patrons can relax with a hot drink. There are delicious homemade cakes for sale, and the smell of freshly brewed Gravity coffee wafts over the area.

Bree and Nikki met three years ago when both their daughters started at a local primary school. With many interests in common, they began importing clothes and also designing outfits for their own label, "Minimii by Breni". Their range sold successfully at local markets and online, so with the full support of their husbands – Mark "Gus" Garthwaite and Henry Fritz – the two mums recently opened the boutique/café in Brice Avenue. They love the friendly feel of the Mooroolbark shopping district and the absence of large department stores and multi-storey shopping centres.

Mii 'O' My stocks fun designer clothes in sizes from newborn to children's size 16. Also available are designer shoes, as well as accessories, gift packs, and specialty items

such as blankets hand-crocheted by Nikki's grandmother Dorothy. There are a range of prices, to suit all budgets.

Customers with children enjoy the unhurried atmosphere of Mii 'O' My and the opportunity for a chat over coffee. There are also many regulars who come just for the coffee and cake – businessmen, retired professionals, and senior citizens on their way home from mid-week church services.

The two owners enjoy their connection to the Mooroolbark community, and when possible they obtain items locally. In cases where Australian products are too expensive, Bree and Nikki only purchase from countries and industries which are certified "fair trade." Operating their business ethically is important to both women ... they use environmentally-friendly products in the cafe, and also donate money from their tip jar to World Vision. Their goal is to provide customers with value for money – with two children each, Nikki and Bree consider it essential that the clothes they sell are durable.

Mii 'O' My also sells items online (miiomy.com.au), with free shipping Australia-wide, and they have a Facebook page (facebook.minimii.com) which gives information on products and promotional discounts.

We wish the two mums every success in their new venture in Brice Avenue!

Janet Van Dijk



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When Graham Bishop decided to wind up his Kilsyth music business Creative Vision Music to move to Queensland, its closure threatened to leave a big hole for a number of students, parents and teachers.

Sam Owen, who had been a guitar teacher at the school for nine years, felt a strong commitment to his many students and was looking for an answer to their needs. At the same time, two parents associated with the school, Kim McIntosh and Michelle Freegard, were pondering over the options that may be available to enable their children to continue their musical pursuits. Michelle commented, "It was not just our own children. We felt it was most important to keep the school going for the benefit of the many local youth who need this choice to be available to them, particularly those who are not involved in sport. Music is a vital option for many of these young people."

Before long, the three had come together to consider what could be done. The outcome of their discussions was that all three decided to pool their resources to purchase the business. They opened, under the new name Sammy's Music School, in January of this year. Most of the teachers who had previously been involved with the business stayed on as the transition took place. Sam and the other teaching staff are very capably backed up by Kim and Michelle, who take care of the many daily administrative and management tasks.

Currently there are 110 students enrolled for individual lessons and a further 40 participating in weekly band sessions. Sam, who grew up in Croydon playing guitar and being involved with local bands, is joined by eleven other teachers in providing for the many areas of music tuition offered. The school maintains a policy of ensuring that very reasonable tuition charges are maintained as they are well aware that for many parents this is a luxury that they struggle to afford for their children. Music recording and mixing, provided by Hills Vibe Productions in association with Sammy's Music School, is another service available in a studio on the premises.

We wish Sammy's Music School every success in this business venture which aims to support our local youth by providing the important opportunity for musical expression.



Lucas Freegard enjoys his weekly lesson time



VIEW Club members assist children to realise their potential

VIEWing Life Differently

Barbara Austin

Would you like the opportunity to help others who are less fortunate than yourself? Have you recently lost your husband and feel disconnected from others? Or are you lacking in self-confidence and feel the need for female companionship?

Beth was feeling lonely and unconnected and needed something more in her life to replace the emptiness that her husband's recent death had left. A friend told her about VIEW Club and encouraged her to go along to meet up with women from all walks of life. Since first attending five months ago, Beth has enjoyed a two-course luncheon, a travelogue of Antarctica, an informative talk about consumer protection, the humour of a marriage celebrant and an impromptu talk on life as a vicar's wife, which proved to be very amusing.

VIEW (Voice, Interests and Education of Women) Club is a volunteer organisation. It provides a safe environment for women, enabling them to establish friendships

through social activities and giving them a sense of purpose and direction. It also helps disadvantaged Australian children by supporting the work of The Smith Family. It provides educational and leadership opportunities to members, promoting the fact that women can be contributing members of the community by creating opportunities for school children in their education, and those in need of school supplies.

VIEW is a non-religious organisation with clubs meeting once a month in different locations around Melbourne. There are social outings, and visitors are warmly welcomed.

The values of the VIEW Club are:

- inclusive and welcoming
- diverse and respecting
- supportive and caring
- locally focused while nationally active
- collaborative and future-looking

Are you interested in joining? The Yarra Valley VIEW Club meets on the last Tuesday in the month at 11:30 a.m. at Chirside Park Country Club, 68 Kingswood Drive, Chirside Park. Contact Ros, the president, on 9725 8880.

The Boronia club meets at Eastwood Golf Club, Liverpool Road, Kilsyth. The president, Rosemary, can be contacted on 9728 3366.

More information, including the location of other clubs, can be found at on VIEW's website: thesmithfamily.com.au/view



Congratulations Bronwyn Harcourt Victorian Secondary Principal of the Year

Doug Lewis

Bronwyn Harcourt is a highly respected and passionate teacher who has overseen significant changes at Croydon Community School during her 13 years as principal. At this year's Victorian Education Excellence Awards, Bronwyn was recognised for her contribution to education: she was named Secondary Principal of the Year for 2013.

Croydon Community School is a small government secondary school with a current enrolment of 110 students ranging from year 7 to year 12. It attracts students from a wide area in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The school provides an alternate secondary education for students who, for various reasons, have experienced major difficulties in their previous schools. Some have returned to secondary education for further study opportunities after having dropped out of a previous school.

Croydon Community School focuses on providing a learning environment where all students can feel supported and safe – regardless of any previous negative experiences they may have had in other educational settings. Often these are students who present with ADHD, anxiety disorders, are on the autism spectrum or have severe language or learning difficulties. All have been at risk of dropping out of secondary education or being excluded because of behavioural issues or a perceived lack of social skills. Croydon provides an important and much-needed alternative for such disenfranchised students. It offers them the opportunity to make a fresh start and to seek ways to re-engage with secondary school life. Ms Harcourt says, "Many students who have experienced severe difficulties in other situations often find that they actually like coming to school at Croydon CS and feel valued in this setting despite their earlier problems."

The low student-teacher ratio that Croydon applies comes at a huge cost but offers increased opportunities for staff to provide greater individual attention for each student and to focus more on building the strong relationships which are vital to their on-going success. This low ratio also provides additional opportunity to work closely with parents in setting educational goals and establishing programs based on the experiences and interests of the individual student.

Significant changes during Bronwyn's time at Croydon include:

- the introduction of VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning – a very practical alternative to VCE).
- the introduction of the Big Picture model of education (from the USA) in 2010.
- a much-improved level of attendance and participation across the student body.

Speaking about the Big Picture model, Ms Harcourt says, "It is not particularly groundbreaking, nor is it some whiz-bang, quick solution. It simply asks what is the most effective program that can be offered to these needy students? And it provides a clear structure to enable the resulting program to be implemented."

She adds, "We have always taken an individual approach to learning because our students have such diverse needs – but now we have a clear framework to underpin and strengthen that approach. This model supports all that we do in working with both the students and the parents to develop effective learning programs based on the experiences and interests of each individual student. **It's interesting to see how well they work when the curriculum is built around those interests and needs.** All programs ultimately incorporate a strong focus on literacy, numeracy and personal development – with the long term goal of developing a positive attitude towards life-long learning."

Regarding her award, Ms Harcourt says, "It is encouraging for all at the school that I have been the recipient of this award. We recognise that all staff and parents have contributed to building our school's reputation. We look forward to continuing to improve and develop the school for the benefit of this needy part of the school population that we serve."

The community thanks Ms Harcourt for her long commitment to CCS students and compliments her on a job really well done.



Note: Writing this article has a very special and personal significance for me. Not long ago CCS provided a new start for a special young friend of mine who was at risk of dropping out of school altogether. Along with his parents and previous teachers, I am most appreciative of the new opportunity he has been given to re-engage in the learning process – an opportunity that Croydon CS has made possible.

DL

FREE FAMILY FILM NIGHT



Adventures in Zambezia

All Welcome

82 minutes – rated G

Kai, a naïve but high-spirited young falcon, travels to the bird city of Zambezia where he discovers the truth about his origins and learns how to be part of a community

Mooroolbark Community Centre
Wednesday 2 October 7:30 p.m.

Free ice-cream, tea & coffee
will be available

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

To reserve your tickets

phone 9726 5488 or book online at
www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/mcc/shp
Bookings commence 18 September

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

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

How easily influenced we can be.

When I began my toolmaking apprenticeship many years ago, it felt different to be amongst only men all day, after several years at school. They had such a variety of cultures, languages and attitudes that affected how they lived, how they spoke and how they cared about their job and others around them. Many of these skilled tradesmen were from Europe – countries like Germany, Yugoslavia, Croatia and England – and about half were Australian.

It didn't take long for me to become one of the men – with regard to the way I spoke, anyway. I realised after a while that I had developed a habit of swearing like several others there – not so much at things, but at people. It didn't seem to hurt anyone; it was just part of the culture of the workplace where so many had little regard for others ... especially those whose ethnicity was different from their own. However, the men responsible for my training rarely swore, particularly when referring to people. Slowly, I learnt from my trainers a better way to operate. I chose to change my newfound ways and show respect for others no matter where they were from! It took time to unlearn habits quickly picked up through ignorance and naivety.

Once I came to see and understand the difference it made sense, but it still took a while to change. Strangely, I began to be respected more too. As a young man learning a trade, I was able to show who I was by what I did, what I made and the way I went about it, rather than by offensive words. There's nothing cool about hurling abuse at others.

There were no laws; no one ever told me not to say the things I said. However, there was a deep sense of respect that was part of my upbringing. I guess it had been pushed to the back when confronted by a different environment – but the old way, taught and modelled by my parents and other adults in my life, won out in the end.

Respect is a sense of regard or honour for another. It's a feeling of consideration for another's situation or position. It's having high esteem for another and treating him with care and courtesy.

That all sounds very old-fashioned doesn't it? Unfortunately, that really seems to be the case these days! I feel that

respect is so old-fashioned that it doesn't exist much anymore in our modern, advanced, sophisticated society.

Actually, my abusive toolmaker co-workers did respect others, but it wasn't allowed to come to the front very often. The verbal tirades were mostly just for show, a bit like when young bucks lock horns and have a battle. Except for a very small minority, most *did* care for others, especially if there was an accident or something important happening – everyone would lend a hand as one.

Respect is one of the pillars of society that allows it to function smoothly – along with honesty, integrity, trust, loyalty, and fairness.

What seems to have happened along the way is that we have lost these core values and replaced them with laws – laws like anti-discrimination, anti-racism, gender and privacy laws, safety and security laws and so on.

The question is, under which system are we better off? Which system adds value to life? Which system encourages community and growth? Which system allows and promotes genuine interest in another's welfare? No number of laws will ever bring people together to fight a common fight or to reach for a common



goal where everyone will benefit. We have to want to do it out of respect. Respect for family, for community, for nation, for company, for sporting club ... respect for self.

Most of us want others to care for us ... But where in life is it OK if we're alright and others don't count?

We used to love it when a runner stopped to help a fallen competitor. Do we still? Do we still model that attitude to our children? The attitude of 'there is more to the race than just winning the race. It's about how you win it'. We try to win with every breath, but it's not worth it when we lose respect for others along the way. Sadly, our politicians often show this to be the case too many times either with their language or their actions.

Self-worth is not just for kids. It's for every person who needs to 'play the hand they're dealt' and not feel 'less' because of what others do or say.

Do we really need laws to tell us not to treat others unfairly, or to get others to treat us fairly? Sadly, it seems we do – but that's not the reason we do it. We should treat others fairly because that's how we want to be treated.

Respect for self is a foundation for respecting others. We shouldn't let

ourselves be a victim of a society that has lost its way – lost respect, lost honesty, lost loyalty, lost fairness and lost integrity. Instead, we can look for ways to teach our children about these core issues and reward and encourage their actions in this regard. When children have a high self-worth, they will have regard for others in ways that a thousand laws will never accomplish.

I look back very fondly on my time as an apprentice and subsequent years as a tradesman ... working with the very people I started to treat rather unkindly. We worked together to accomplish some amazing tasks and projects. I'm glad that the foundation of respect that my parents and others modelled won through in the end and that these fellow workers became mates.

How easily we can be influenced – even when we know better! Let's all take stock of how we treat others and determine whether it is with respect – for them, and for ourselves too.



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CHURCH NEWS

EAST from WEST

For some reason, unconditional love and forgiveness often seems “too good to be true.”

God tells us that, through Jesus, he has removed the penalty of sin. But we find this hard to accept at face value. We hear that our sins are forgiven, but we feel the need to add a conditional “if.” We also understand that God’s love for us is unconditional, and yet we still think there is a “but.” For some reason, unconditional love and forgiveness seem “too good to be true.”

Even in Old Testament times, some were able to glimpse into the fullness of God’s desire to forgive and forget. In Psalm 103, verses 11 and 12, David wrote:

“For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

At the time David wrote this, most people never travelled far from home. They thought of the heavens as an inverted bowl in which the



sun, moon and stars somehow moved. Within their limited grasp of the cosmos, far east and west could have been just over the horizon, and “as high as heaven” was somewhere above the clouds.

Nowadays, when we can fly far above the clouds to travel long distances, David’s analogy may seem less impressive, but it shouldn’t. Recently, we had a reminder of how far beyond our human grasp the cosmos really is.

Voyager 1, the unmanned spacecraft originally launched September 1977, has been back in the news. It was launched on a trajectory that took it past Jupiter and Saturn. Voyager fulfilled its mission brilliantly, sending back stunning pictures of these two giant planets. But then, it kept on going – and it is still going, still beaming back information after 35 years.

Voyager has travelled farther “from east to west” than any other manmade object. It is now over 11 billion miles away, close to

the point where it will leave our solar system altogether and head off into interstellar space. It will eventually come under the influence of another star, but not for another 40,000 years!

Perhaps if David was writing Psalm 103 today, he might say something like this:

“For as far as interstellar space reaches away from earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the Voyager spacecraft has travelled from east to west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

The point is, God’s love for us, and his desire to remove the guilt and stain of our sins, is still greater than anything we humans can imagine, and it always will be.

Joseph Tkach

This article is a transcript of a video presentation available on the Grace Communion International website. It is one of a series of presentations entitled “Speaking of Life”. Both video and transcripts of other articles are available at www.gci.org/speakingoflife



National Day of Thanksgiving

Shire of Yarra Ranges 8th Annual Mayoral Breakfast



National Day of Thanksgiving Mayoral Breakfast



The Oxley College Quintet



Don Elgin

Saturday May 25th was the occasion for the Shire of Yarra Ranges 8th annual celebration of our National Day of Thanksgiving – conducted at the Foothills Conference Centre in Mooroolbark. In welcoming the 200 participants to this year’s Breakfast, Mayor Jim Child spoke of the importance of giving due recognition to the many thousands of people who enrich our community life through their work in service organisations or as highly valued volunteers in so many areas of need.

This year’s theme was “Triumph of the Human Spirit” – an opportunity to honour people from many walks of life who have triumphed over adversity, hardship and disability, and in the process have supported,

mentored and inspired others to reach towards their dreams.

Master of Ceremonies Randall Bouchier presented the stories and achievements of the guests who were honoured on this occasion. Those guests were Sandra Leehy, Kevin and Elizabeth Love, Neville Lester, Darrell and Margaret Clarkson, Peter and Margaret Goldup, Jennifer Mattinson, Matthew Haanappel and Ngun Chawng Hram Kam.

The guest speaker for the morning was Don Elgin, who represented Australia at four world championships and three Paralympic Games. He was a triple medallist at the Athens paralympics in 2004 and most recently was track and field team manager for the Aussies at the London Paralympics. In

his highly entertaining and inspiring message, he encouraged us all to “play the cards we are dealt with, to pursue our dreams and to love the journey.” A husband, and father of four children, Don is the founder and director of StarAmp Global, a boutique management business which manages some of Australia’s finest talent.

The exceptional items presented by the Oxley College vocal quintet provided an enjoyable addition to the morning’s program.

Our National Day of Thanksgiving Mayoral Breakfast is arranged by a committee representing many of the local churches in the Lilydale and surrounding area.



Local Cub Scouts Achieve Highest Award

Grey Wolf Award

August 14th saw the presentation of the much-valued Grey Wolf Award to local cub scouts Jason Kennedy and Emily Russo. This highest award at Cub Scout level involves the completion of a wide variety of leadership challenges. It is described as no easy target to achieve, as it demands a significant measure of perseverance and hard work to meet all of the requirements.

One major challenge requires the cub scout to plan and lead a two-hour hike. This involves researching the route to be taken, inviting cubs to participate, ensuring that everyone is properly equipped and taking all decisions on the day – a significant leadership challenge for a 10 year old. Since 2008 only five other locals have achieved this highest cub scout award. They are Rupert Lang, Tyler Vallance, Jordan Daniels, Patrick Keating and Rhiannon Nanscawen. They are all to be congratulated on this significant achievement.

Speaking of the scouting movement in general, Group Leader Andrew Lang says, "Scouting offers a program for boys and girls aged 6 - 26 years which has the long term goal of developing mature and responsible citizens and potential community leaders." No doubt our Grey Wolf Award winners are well on the way to fulfilling these roles in the future.

Scouting offers the following levels of participation:

	Ages
Joey's	6 - 8
Cub Scouts	7 ½ - 11
Scouts	11 ½ - 15
Venturers	14 ½ - 18

Each section has a structured program of achievements and awards with a major award offered at every level. Maturity, responsibility and leadership are the constant goals. Many would have heard of the Queen's Scout Award, the highest award for youth in the scouting movement. This can be achieved at Venturer level. The program extends into young adulthood with the Rovers program for 18 - 26 year olds.

1st Mooroolbark Scouts Group

Life is booming at 1st Mooroolbark Scouts Group. Attendance has increased significantly in recent years. There are now over 30 children in the Cub Scouts section (ages 7 ½ - 11 years) and also significant increases

in other sections. This development resulted in the group recently achieving the Chief Commissioner's award for more than 20% growth. 1st Mooroolbark also received a Quality Scouting Award for retention of membership. This recognises the high quality programs which have served to help local youth remain motivated and interested.

Want to know more? 1st Mooroolbark Scout Group is a part of the Yarra Ranges district. Please contact Andrew Lang on 0417 556 848 for information about this group. Other Scouting groups within our district include Lilydale, Mount Evelyn, Montrose and each of the various smaller townships in the Yarra Valley area.



Madeleine Keating (left) and Talon Wright (right) congratulate Grey Wolf Award winners Jason Kennedy and Emily Russo

Mooroolbark's 10th Annual Community Tree-Planting Day

Thank you to all who gave their time to support this valuable community program

Over ninety representatives of local organisations and other interested community members participated in our 10th annual Tree-Planting Day on Sunday 28 July. In less than two hours, our volunteers planted over 1,200 trees and shrubs along the pathway at the northern end of Balcombe Reserve. Our thanks go to the Yarra Ranges Council employees who were there to set out all the plants, covers and stakes in readiness for the work to begin. The day concluded with hot drinks and a delicious afternoon tea of freshly-baked jam donuts and pikelets, and time for a good chat.





"From very humble beginnings, we now move about 12,000 kilograms (12 tons of food a week) in kind."

For an organisation that has existed for little more than a year, the achievements of the Eastern Food Alliance – operating out of its factory in Kilsyth – are nothing short of impressive!

EFA is a not-for-profit organisation which provides food and other items to the needy. Food that otherwise would go to waste is delivered to the EFA warehouse, where it is sorted by volunteers before being distributed to those who need it most.

I'll let director Mark Davis tell the story:

"From very humble beginnings, we now move about 12,000 kilograms (12 tonnes of food a week) in kind. We lose about 1.5 tonnes in food waste which goes to free-range pig farmers, one in Yea and one in Wandin, as well as 500 kg to a local chook farmer."

"In our first week of operation in July 2012, we received 800 kilograms of red seedless grapes to distribute, and that's what we did for the first three days. We sorted them once, we sorted them twice, we sorted them a third time, and every day we pulled them out, they were worse. We had to finally send the last few hundred kilos back to head office in Kensington. We also had half a tonne of baby food in sachets that were out of date. We had to squeeze them out into bins and donate it all to a free-range pig farmer."

"Currently we're distributing about ten and a half tonnes of food each week to about 36 charitable agencies. There are four primary schools that we now support with their one-piece-of-fruit-a-day programs. We provide that once a week. There are six food banks and 15 soup/meal kitchens that we help, including the provision of meat."

"We estimate we impact about 40,000 people a month."

On the surface, it would appear that EFA is simply a warehousing and distribution agency that is able to deliver donated food on behalf of SecondBite.org to charitable organisations throughout our eastern region. But there's so much more going on behind the scenes, because EFA is primarily a training company that specialises in offering workplace training. But, rather than existing solely as a training company, it explored ways of offering its students on-the-job

training – but with one further caveat – that the students work to benefit the surrounding community.

Mark explained that four years ago, Kevin Hall – one of the directors of EFA's parent company Food Alliance Australia – realised that there were people in his hometown of Sunbury who were not getting enough food. He explored ways of helping meet the need and realised that his training business presented a potentially effective vehicle for distributing food that could be accessed by partnering with an existing agency that was already receiving large quantities of donated foodstuffs. There were to be big changes ahead for a company that had specialised in providing vocational training from its premises in Tullamarine!

In the June edition of *Living Today*, I wrote about SecondBite¹, a food distribution company which is headquartered in Kensington. I mentioned the beneficial role SecondBite plays in "rescuing" excess food from producers, wholesalers and retail outlets.

Mark explained that Kevin approached SecondBite with an offer too good to refuse:

"What we said was, 'We've got a ready-made army of 30 or 40 people. We can give you a hand to shift your food.' SecondBite was concerned about what it was going to cost, because although they'd always distributed food themselves in Victoria, they have a paid model in other states. They'd been storing everything in their Kensington warehouse and operating from there."

"So we opened up our first warehouse in Campbellfield, picked up food from Kensington, took it to Campbellfield, sorted it, and started distributing it to agencies in the Hume area."

"We designed a program that would enable us to fund a charitable warehouse without having to pay for the food that we source."

When the company started EFA, their Kilsyth warehouse was the first to house SecondBite and Food Alliance in the same premises.

"We are a not-for-profit limited company, which operates as a social enterprise. We would not exist if we didn't have the partnerships with SecondBite. We are able to use our training company to train people to work with food and distribution and warehousing logistics. SecondBite has contracts with supermarkets for rescuing food and then re-distributing it. We look after quality management and distribution, with the goal of bringing all our operations together in ways that support our eastern community."

"Within this overall framework, we train high school students in vocational/educational skills as well as supporting literacy and numeracy. We also support the disability sector with a paid employment program, and Work for the Dole people with their Centrelink requirements. We also work with Jobs Services Australia, Peter Rosso, Wise Employment, Rigs, Reading Partnership, Mission Australia and EACH Employment – we help with their people who have a requirement under Centrelink to be either studying or doing JobSearch. And that can be under or over 12 months, short term, long term or extremely long term, which is up to five years that they've been unemployed."

"We also support Structured Workplace Learning or work experience in our school programs and our work experience component is designed to give people a taste of transport logistics."

"We operate as a social enterprise, because TAFE, or the Registered Training Organisations we work with, want to see that if their students are completing a vocational qualification, they need to practise what they're learning. So if you're studying warehousing, work in a warehouse; if you're training in hospitality, be in a kitchen; if you're training retail, be in a shopfront in a strip mall or shopping centre."

"So our company focused exclusively on workplace training in retail, hospitality and small business, by working alongside businesses like Nando's, Crust Gourmet Pizza, Subway and Bakers Delight."

"And we're able to offer retailing experience in places like Muffin Break, McDonalds, and even in Bakers Delight where we were training front-of-house girls

¹ "So You're Cynical about Politicians". p12



to do retail and sales, not just back-of-house and bakery.”

“Our philosophy is that it’s not just about being trained. There’s actually a whole lot of other stuff going on.”

“Our students are going to develop community responsibility, friendship, leadership, a desire to want more from life; develop the potential to earn good money in their next job.”

“Take Rodney over there. He has a back injury. Eleven years ago he was hit by a car. After five years of being out of work, he’s one of my floor supervisors. He used to do all the stuff he is doing now in the past in a training organisation, and I kept asking him, every week for about three months, if he’d work for us. At that stage it was early days here. I was operations manager and director, and running the forklift and moving food around. So I kept asking him: ‘Are you ready to start work?’ ‘No, I’m not ready yet. I don’t want to start until I’m ready. I don’t want to let you down.’ A week before Christmas, he told me he was ready. We were about to take two weeks’ break and weren’t going to hire anyone till February! He said, ‘That’s OK, I’ll give it everything I’ve got; I totally believe in what you’re trying to do here.’”

“Our double-pronged attack of training and our focus on the community via our social enterprise seems to be a magical mix.”

“As we provide certificate II, III and IV training we might provide students with new knowledge about warehousing, transport and logistics. Some might not have been in school for 40 years. I have a 64-year-old Chinese restaurateur who’s been out of business for ten years and is unemployed. He’s learning a whole new language based around transport and logistics, plus English as a second language, and so we have integration aides, and provide literacy and numeracy support and we develop competencies with iPads, calculators, laptops, translation software and so on, to assist with skill development.”

“We’ve been able to offer SecondBite our team of highly motivated job seekers, who want to get a job – who want to get a forklift licence and be involved in producing a fantastic output. We also offered SecondBite the quality systems and customer service we’ve developed, along with the local knowledge we’ve developed about the local

environment, local agencies, local charities and supermarkets – the local community.”

“We’ve created a hub and spoke model. We created a hub in Warburton. We deliver a tonne and a half of food, but four agencies feed off that. And we go to Whittlesea now; ten churches and community organisations work together. We drop a tonne of food. It’s distributed to all of them.”

“We’ve been successful because we are able to process and deliver food quickly. Things that come in today will be going out tomorrow. This has provided SecondBite with a different model – whereas they might receive 50 to 60 pallets of food delivered to their Kensington warehouse, there may be a long turn-around because the client charities might not have their next pick up for several days. Whereas now, if there’s a sudden in-rush of food, SecondBite will call and let us know they have a tonne of peaches or 500 kg of oranges. ‘Can you guys take them?’ ‘Yes, we’ve got space in the fridge, but more importantly we can deliver them to the agencies while they’re fresh and in peak condition today.’ That’s what SecondBite loves.”

“Because of our innovation, more food has become available, resulting in more delivery and pick-up runs. Logistically, there are five vans out on the road each day out of Kensington, two vans here, and a truck twice a week. Because of the growth we’ll now have up to 45 or 50 students here per day working on various types of qualification. There’s always some upstairs in the training room, some at the computers doing job search, some outside cleaning crates and washing vehicles. Others will be sorting food and preparing orders for charities.”

“As a result of all of this, we’ve been asked to look at partnering with SecondBite in other states. SecondBite just has to set up the structure, set up the relationships with the stores and the charities, and then let the food start rolling for our students to work with.”

And for Mark?

“I get to do the stuff that I like to do – motivation and confidence-building in people. I enjoy watching them shift from where they are to seeing where they want to be and understanding that there’s actually a path to get there.”

“From that moment on, we get on the same side of the table as them and we work together towards six weeks, 13 weeks, a year ... what’s our time frame? Let’s roll out some change in your life. Because I don’t want you here in a year’s time, unless you’re running the program as the operations manager, or here because you’re a trainer helping other people. You need to move out of here at the end of your program and go and start the next phase of your life.”

“If I see someone that’s slipping, I take them to one side and have a one-on-one. If someone looks like they’re struggling and they’re not eating properly, I take them aside and give them food at the end of the day.”

“The best thing and saddest thing is when they go from our training program ... but you want them to come back to tell you how they’re going, because the future they created is something that makes us all proud.”



Randall Bourchier

A Cup of Kindness



You may have heard the term 'random acts of kindness', which refers to performing small acts of kindness for others – usually strangers. If you sometimes struggle to think of what kindness you might do for a

complete stranger, the idea of "suspended coffee" could help you.

The concept of *caffé sospeso* began a century ago in Italy, and is simple: when customers visit a participating café, they pay for a coffee for someone who cannot afford it. The café puts the coffee "on hold". When a person going through tough times asks if there are any suspended coffees available, the restaurant provides the needy person with one of those prepaid coffees.

The suspended coffee program is rapidly spreading around the world, and began in Melbourne in March 2013. Mooroolbark mother Lisa Currie, who already runs a community and school program promoting kindness¹, felt inspired to support the project by visiting local cafés and asking them to take part. There are now around 15 participating cafés in the Yarra Ranges area. The owners of those cafés or bakeries place the suspended coffee logo in their window, and inside have a display showing the number of coffees on hold, so that needy people can easily see whether prepaid coffee is available.

The simple generosity of providing a coffee for someone in need can be much more than just giving someone a warm drink on a cold day. In tough times, the cost of a cup of coffee can be beyond the reach of many people. Being unable to afford this basic pleasure can further isolate people from the rest of society. With the help of suspended coffee, those less fortunate can order a coffee just like others around them.

When asked about the possibility that someone might misuse the scheme, Lisa says, "It's an honour system. I'm sure there are going to be times where a few coffees are given to people who could honestly afford to buy a coffee themselves ... but if they really don't need that coffee, they are coming in for something else. They are needy in some other way."

To participate, look for the 'suspended coffee supporter' logo when you visit your local café. And if your favourite café is not already involved, share the news about this wonderful project!

For a list of participating cafés, see www.suspendedcoffeemelbourne.com.au. Café owners are encouraged to become involved by emailing Lisa Currie: lisa@ripplekindness.org.

Janet Van Dijk

How they record
Suspended Coffees at

Bricey's Deli Cafe
Brice Avenue
Mooroolbark, Victoria



¹ Ripple Kindness Project for Schools is an ongoing kindness curriculum that promotes caring and compassion in primary schools to encourage positive school environments and reduce bullying. www.ripplekindness.org

Montrose Men's Shed – Up and Running

After a lengthy journey in gathering support for a Montrose Men's Shed and then searching for a suitable home, the official 'handing over of the keys' took place on Friday July 12th.



Club President Max Lamb, left, receives the keys from Councillor Len Cox

At the club's initial meeting Councillor Len Cox expressed his delight at being able to welcome the men to their new headquarters – the Old Montrose Fire Station. Cr Cox, who had played a significant role in arranging for the club to gain use of this building, also offered additional support in working through the initial stages of setting up the facility for club use.

At this, the first official club meeting, Max Lamb was elected as the club president. Max then presided over the election of other office bearers and the meeting moved to immediately begin the process of becoming incorporated. They also agreed to begin their program by operating the shed on two days each week – Tuesdays and Fridays.

Other matters – such as establishing membership procedures and member fees, opening a bank account and seeking out insurance cover and association with Men's Shed Victoria – were also dealt with.

Max announced that the initial activities for the club would centre around traditional wood-working skills as the basis for building a strong social connection for the more than 25 local men who have already indicated a keen interest in being involved with the club.

Max thanked Cr Cox and other shire representatives who had done so much to help the club reach this point. He also expressed thanks to the Rotary Club of Montrose and District Inc. for their encouragement and support through the initial process of establishing the club. He said a formal event will be arranged in the near future to officially launch Montrose District Mens' Shed Inc.

The new club will need much in the way of equipment to become fully established. The committee indicated that they would love to hear from anyone who can help by donating furniture, tools, office equipment, etc.

Anyone interested in finding out more about Montrose and District Men's Shed is invited to contact Max Lamb on 0427 358 000. The club looks forward to growing its members in the months ahead.



Committee officials and reps. with Cr Len Cox: L-R Bob Hovenden, George Gredler, Harald Helmer, Richard Fennell, Robbert Kop, Geoff Brown, Cr Len Cox, Max Lamb

The Old Montrose Fire Station was built just after the Second World War. The building, which contains bricks manufactured at the old Montrose brick factory, currently has a heritage overlay. It is 30 years since the building was last used by fire fighters; it was most recently used as a St John's Ambulance base.

Max looks forward to the club working to discover more of the history of the building and to incorporating its story in the development of the facility.

Jane performs her new show *French Kiss*

Mooroolbark Community Centre

It is fantastic to see the Mooroolbark community showing support for the Red Earth series of shows being presented at Mooroolbark Community Centre, with the first four shows selling out. The Australian Army Band, *The Girls in Grey*, *The Famous Maurice Flea Circus* and *The Sand Dragon's Tail* all enjoyed capacity audiences and there are plenty more exciting shows coming up throughout the spring season.

Some highlights of the coming months include the Victorian Concert Orchestra on Sunday September 15 and *Squaring the Wheel*, an Arts Victoria touring theatre production that is part of the October school holidays program. Tickets for the Victorian Concert Orchestra (\$10/\$5 concession) are selling fast, so get in quickly to secure your seat. For nearly 100 years this iconic 50-piece symphony orchestra has become renowned for an ever-changing variety program that ranges from the classics (including Bach, Mozart and Tchaikovsky), through operetta and musical theatre (from Gilbert and Sullivan to Andrew Lloyd Webber) to contemporary composers such as John Williams (*Star Wars*) and Peter Allen. Directed by acclaimed ABC Orchestra conductor Gerald Keuneman – who has performed with artists Frank Sinatra, Elton John, Olivia Newton-John, Anthony Warlow and Nick Cave – it promises to be a highly professional performance.

An integral part of the orchestra's community program is its work with schools. In the lead up they work up three performance pieces with local students, including "Advance Australia Fair" and "I Still Call Australia Home", which will be opening the show.

MCC also now enjoys a wider range of term time and school holiday programs including an extensive array of free and low-cost family activities such as pottery for both adults and children, art for kids, free movie sessions and 'The Big Draw'. The Big Draw is the world's biggest celebration of drawing, covering 20 countries and involving over 200,000 participants. MCC, in partnership with Eastern Regional Libraries, will be transformed into a place of unlimited scope for those who love to draw and those who think that they can't. Connect with people of all ages and abilities this October and explore this year's theme: Draw Tomorrow.

The Australian Army Band will also soon be returning to our other local venue the Montrose Town Centre in the form of their 10-piece jazz ensemble. Other performances coming up at MTC include Australia's premier *a cappella* ensemble The Idea of North, winners of 2013 Adelaide Festival award for Best Music Performance. Jane Rutter will also be giving her only public Melbourne performance of 2013.

Jane performs her new show *French Kiss*, a luscious concert-theatre piece with delicious French music from *la belle époque* to the present day. Following the success of her film *An Australian in Paris*, internationally-acclaimed darling of the flute and number one recording artist Jane Rutter brings her incomparable classical and cabaret artistry to the Montrose Town Centre. With French poetry and Jane's anecdotes, *French Kiss* includes the company of ghosts from the Parisian artistic past, and the music of Chopin, Gounod, Faure, Poulenc, Offenbach, Massenet, Cole Porter, Piaf, and Aznavour as well as delightful French salon and cabaret pieces. *French Kiss* is a musical tour de force which has evoked standing ovations in Paris and Australia. Jane Rutter is accompanied by brilliant young pianist Cho Ki Wong.

You can stay in touch with all the goings-on at both local venues and receive preferential deals and special offers by visiting and liking the Facebook pages of Montrose Town Centre and Mooroolbark Community Centre. Tickets for these and many other shows and activities can be booked online at www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach or by calling 9726 5488.

Andrew Simpson

HOOKEY PARK



Families are enjoying a new state-of-the-art adventure playground at Hookey Park as work continues on stage two of the redevelopment.

The \$1.379m project is the result of the park's master plan adopted by council in 2011. The redevelopment has a strong emphasis on improving safety in the park.

In developing the plan, council consulted with residents, traders and the local community. Council's landscape architects for the project also consulted with local school children to ensure the space was well used and enjoyed by the whole community.

Highlights of the new playground include a tree house and bridge explorer walk. There is also a whirlwind swing and plenty of activities for a variety of age groups to enjoy. The play equipment has been designed to include the natural environment with a dry rock bed to explore.

Stage two of the project includes picnic seating, a BBQ, benches and seats, new trees and garden beds and an upgrade to the park's memorial. Footpaths are being upgraded and more night lighting will be added to the park, making it an enjoyable space for families.

Work on the second stage is expected to be completed in September 2013.

The work at Hookey Park reflects the community's desire for safer, more accessible spaces to relax and enjoy the surroundings. The upgrade also maintains the sense of fun and vibrancy unique to the Yarra Ranges.

More work is planned for Mooroolbark in 2014 with council still working with the state government on the railway station redesign.

This project was developed with extensive community involvement, so we look forward to the outcomes.

Another stage of streetscape works is also planned for 2014.

Cr Terry Avery
Melba Ward Councillor



Community Events Calendar

First Sunday of each month	Farmers Market: Bellbird Park, Swansea Road, next to Lillydale Lake. Combined Rotary Clubs. All proceeds to local and overseas projects. Contact Bill Sutherland: 9727 0037.
Friday nights during school term	Fridays@Kids Domain: Activities for primary school age kids. 4-6 p.m. Oxley College stadium. Details: phone 9726 8111 or www.lmc.org.au
Thurs evenings weekly	Maroondah TOWN Club: (Take Off Weight Naturally). Weekly, starting at 6:30 p.m. at St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. More information: 0425 739 576.
Mondays weekly	Scottish Country Dancing: Mondays 8 p.m. (except public holidays.) Beginners and experienced. Minimal charges. St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. Enquiries: 9876 9206.
School holidays program	Sammy's Music School: Radical activities for young musicians in the making (age 10-17yrs). Song writing, band skills, rap. Info: Sammymusicschool@gmail.com or 9723 3344.
Mon & Thurs during school term	Sing Move Shake – fun with music for toddlers: 10:00-10:45 a.m. Rhythm and movement; \$6 per session. Edinburgh Adventist Primary School, Edinburgh Road. Enquiries: Anne Turnbull 0438 596 232.
Wednesdays during school term	Happy Hands Art Time – Encouraging Creativity: children 1-5 yrs. 9:30-11:00 a.m. or 11:45a.m.-1:15 p.m. Register online: www.happyhandsart.com
September 11	Lilydale Adventist Schools Tour Dates: 10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 2:00p.m. For more information or to arrange an alternate time, phone 9761 9991 (ELC), 9728 8833 (primary) or 9728 2211 (secondary).
September - December	Yarra Ranges Council Immunisation Sessions: Sept 3, 11, 24, Oct 1, 9, 22, Nov 13, 26, Dec 3, 11, 24. Mooroolbark Community Centre. More information: 1300 368 333.
1st Wed each month	Montrose Movie Club: offers great movies in a relaxed theatre environment on the first Wednesday evening of each month. Montrose Town Centre. Bookings www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach or 9761 9133.
Oct, Nov, Dec	Red Earth Gallery Exhibitions: "The Big Draw" October 1-31; "Cultural Travels" November 6-28; "Artists in (our) Residence" December 3-19. Red Earth Gallery, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Ph: 9726 5488.
Sep, October, Nov	Montrose Concert Series: The Idea of North – 28 September; Jane Rutter - 11 October; Australian Army Jazz Band - 29 November. Montrose Town Centre. Bookings www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach or 9761 9133.
September 15	Victorian Concert Orchestra: one of Australia's longest standing touring orchestras providing first class musical entertainment to people of all ages and tastes since 1926. Mooroolbark Community Centre. Bookings www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach or 9726 5488.
September 20 & November 1	Blue Light Disco: Mooroolbark Community Centre from 7 p.m. Bookings www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach or 9726 5488.
September 23 - October 4	School Holiday Program: Free and low cost activities during school holidays - Art 4 Kids, Pottery 4 Kids, live performances, movies. Mooroolbark Community Centre, Montrose Town Centre, Eastern Regional Libraries. Bookings www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach or 9726 5488.
September 26	"Squeaky Window": School holiday performance. Montrose Town Centre. Bookings 9761 9133 or www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach
Sep 30 - Oct 1	Red Cross Blood Bank: Mooroolbark Community Centre. Bookings: 13 14 95.
October 2	FREE School Holiday Movie Night: Adventures in Zambezia (G). Mooroolbark Community Centre from 7:00 p.m. Bookings commence 18 September: www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach or 9726 5488.
October 3	"Squaring the Wheel": School holiday performance. Mooroolbark Community Centre. Bookings: www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach or 9726 5488.
October 7	Term 4 Workshops: Pottery, oil painting, Art 4 Kids, Pottery 4 Kids.
Sunday October 20	Heritage Open Day: Annual family event including children's activities. Gold coin entry. Upper Yarra Museum, Old Station Yarra Junction. 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Friday October 25	Celebrating Mooroolbark: A presentation on the making of Mooroolbark History Group's first book. Mooroolbark Library. Commences 1:00 p.m. Free – Bookings essential: 9726 8200
November 20	Performance Platform – Young Performers Concert: Montrose Town Centre. More information: www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach or 9761 9133.
November 17	Carers' Pamper Day: A free day of fun and pampering for carers of the sick or disabled. 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at Irabina, 193 Bayswater Road, Bayswater. Contact orlam@irabina.com to book therapies/activities.
November 10	Climate Change 101– Free interactive Workshop: Everything you wanted to know about climate change but were afraid to ask. Mooroolbark Library, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Bookings: 9726 8200.
November 7-9 November 13-16	Mooroolbark Theatre Group presents: <i>Agatha Crusty and the Village Hall Murders</i> . Mooroolbark Community Centre. Tickets: \$16 (Concession \$14). Bookings: 9726 4282 info: http://tinyurl.com/7u4fn

To include your community event in our calendar please contact the editor on 9761 1121 or lewisdm@bigpond.net.au

Our next issue will be in the first week of December. Calendar entries need to be lodged by the 1st of November.

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Like to contribute?
**If you have a good news story about
people or groups who you believe
are an inspiration to the community,
please contact the editor through
our church-office phone number
or by email (as above)**

MISSIONSTATEMENT

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

ADVERTISING POLICY

Living Today does not publish direct advertising. We do, however, greatly appreciate the valuable contributions made by those who partner with us in serving our local community through this magazine. We acknowledge those partners in each issue.