

LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges

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- ★ Mooroolbark Football Club – a great sporting community
- ★ Meet Mayor Maria McCarthy

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An Advocate for the

There are many life threads that have intertwined to culminate in the daughter of post-war Italian immigrants becoming the Mayor of Yarra Ranges! Possessed with a bright and cheery brisk intelligence, Maria McCarthy, in my experience, is quick to help where she can, spurred on by a compassionate empathy towards others—a quality which I deeply admire.

Councillor McCarthy says of her father's family, "It's hard for me to understand the hardships they had. The war started when my father was young, which led to him coming here from Italy."

"My dad's father died when he was two and left my grandmother with seven children under the age of ten. An earthquake in the area had demolished a major section of their home. There was no money to repair the house and my dad remembers going down to the river at night and furtively collecting stones so that in the daylight they could fix the house.

"When the war started my grandmother became totally destitute. It's a sad story, but also one of courage. She worked to feed her children, who were left to care for themselves whilst she was at work. Returning from work, she would sometimes cry and ask God to let her die so that the government would care for the children, so difficult was the task of feeding and clothing them.

"My dad always said: 'You don't understand hunger.' He'd be upset if we threw food away. He told a story that we were tired of hearing, about how my grandmother on occasions managed to buy flour for pasta for an enjoyable meal. By contrast, the following day the meal would involve scraping any remaining flour from the table with a knife and adding water to make a thin gruel.

"My grandmother did well to keep her children together," continued Maria. "My father was 19 when he saw a poster offering a new life in a new land. Following a successful interview at the Australian Consulate in Naples, he was accepted to come to Australia as an assisted migrant. During the sea voyage, he saw many things for the first time—Arabs, slaves, dark-skinned people—but perhaps the greatest eye-opener for him was the food! He couldn't understand that meals were frequent and plentiful."

Eventually, after a stint at the Bonegilla migrant centre, Maria's father moved to Melbourne, worked at Metters as an electrician and bought a house in Ascot Vale. He then began the long process of helping his family to immigrate to Australia to join him.



Mayor Maria McCarthy plans to be a voice for ratepayers.

"My mum's father had settled in Wandin, so when I was two or three, Dad moved the family back to Wandin and settled on another farm. We moved into the Lilydale fish shop when I was about four or five.¹ There was a residence at the back, and it seems strange to me now to see the travel agency and conveying premises on the site. My brother's bedroom was where the conveyancing business is and the front door of the travel agent's was the front door to the fish shop. There was a Coke box I stood on to make milk shakes and serve (there were no rules about what you could and couldn't do then) and I used to handle money and give change. My parents trusted me at a very young age, which was good."

A beautiful family photograph shows four-year-old Maria standing behind the counter of her parent's Lilydale shop, Charlie's Fish and Chips.

After attending St Patrick's Primary School, Maria went to Mt Lilydale College. "I guess there was that sense of being an Italian when you were at school, but from my perspective, I was too Australian to be an Italian and I was too Italian to be Australian. I sort of sat in that no-man's land, but I didn't have any

problems with my girlfriends; they were fine. Looking back on it now, it was all just normal teenage stuff."

Maria mentioned that Italian settlers have played a significant role in the Yarra Valley since the 1860s. In 2009, the Yarra Valley Italian Cultural Group published a moving series of historical recollections from Italian families entitled *Dreams from a Suitcase*.² Maria's sense of local history has been heightened through her happy marriage of over thirty five years.³

She said, "I married my husband, Bryan McCarthy, in 1976. I was 19 and Bryan was 21—after I'd stalked him from the very young age of 14. When the fish shop closed, Mum and Dad built a house at Wandin North and then bought another business in Lilydale which was known as Charlie's Deli. Bryan stood out from the crowd for me. He was tall, skinny and redheaded and, from my bedroom window, I could see his mum dropping him off at the Wandin North bus stop on work days so that he could travel to work at Greenfields in Lilydale.

"At some stage I discovered that he came to our deli to buy his lunch. I used to go there before school to make his lunch. I gave him special treatment. I'd put the sandwiches (with extra meat), and coffee scroll to the side so that all Mrs Phillips—one of Mum's employees—needed to do was to make his banana milk shake. He couldn't understand why his lunch was the quickest to be made!

"When I was sixteen I needed a deb partner. I decided on Bryan. My Mum was mortified because, with our Italian background, I couldn't ask Bryan. Mum had to ask him for me. I was so embarrassed! He said he'd have to think about it. About a week later, I was so relieved when he finally said yes.

"But there was more. I was the only girl with a chaperone when we went to deb practice. My parents insisted that my brother go with me every week. But I thought: 'If that's the deal, it's better than nothing!' There was another surprise awaiting me, though. The practice was held at Yarra Glen. We were sitting in Bryan's car waiting, when another car pulled up: it was my cousin Robert with his deb partner. I've never seen Bryan so excited to see somebody. I thought he was there for me, but he was excited to see

² <http://www.memorifoundation.org.au/assets/dreams-from-a-suitcase-extract-web.pdf> to view several pages of this publication

³ The McCarthy family (along with others like the Chapmans) were some of the original settlers in the Wandin/Silvan area.

¹ On the corner of Clark and Main streets, Lilydale

Community



Robert. I didn't realise he knew my cousin and that they were the best of friends."

Maria described Bryan as the best thing that happened in her life. "He gave me wings! To this day Bryan is very supportive of me and proud of my achievements."

Successfully running her own business in Lilydale, Maria felt it important to give back to the community by serving as president of the Lilydale Chamber of Commerce and president of the Friends of the Lilydale Museum. Maria then began to experience severe leg pain. After selling her business, she worked for a time as a sales rep and one day a week for local MP Christine Fyffe, before her condition made it impossible to work.

Finally, tests revealed a 10cm tumour on her spinal cord. The surgeons removed the tumour but not without damaging the nerves, leaving Maria to struggle with a disability.

Maria said the changes in her circumstances have been hard for Bryan too. "The way we live our life—everything's changed. It's been a huge adjustment for the two of us.⁴ But the best part is that I can tell him about my distress. I can say to him: 'If you didn't love me it would be so much easier just to throw myself over a cliff.' And he says, 'Ah, are you happy now? Have you got it off your chest? Now go to sleep and have a rest and we'll sort it out in the morning.' He has never

criticised me for my attitude. He's been so helpful. I'm very fortunate—he's a good man.

"After the surgery, I was unable to go back to work. I needed something to do and with Christine Fyffe's advice eventually I started supporting the Mt Evelyn Street Party Committee. Even that was uncomfortable. I needed a walking stick; I couldn't walk properly. I struggled to concentrate. I didn't drive for four or five years.

"When local government opportunities came to me two years ago, I thought maybe I could do it. It's been the best thing because it's taken me beyond self-pity. You can't complain to everybody that you don't feel well, or your head's spinning today, or you feel queasy, or your leg's really sore... So, I put my hat in the ring: 'Aw, who's going to vote for me? Who's going to want me to be a representative? No one knows me!' But—shock, horror—I was elected."

Since becoming a councillor, Maria has increasingly come to admire the work council does for the region. "I'd like to show people that council is here for the community," she said. "Perhaps the general public don't like governments. But then, we're not a government. We're here for the community. We don't follow a political wing, or political party. We are, ultimately, apolitical. No councillor here follows a political line, which is good. I didn't know that. I didn't understand that. It's not till you come in that you realise we're just a group of nine councillors

working for our community, just as the entire organisation works for this community.

"As mayor this year, I'd like the public to see that the shire organisation is there for them. My goal is to create a series of videos. I'd like to be the voice of the ratepayer. I'd like to interview our CEO and I'd like to interview all the directors. I'd like to ask some of the questions that ratepayers would like to ask. Many people may struggle to know how the system works. I'd like to help make that more transparent, more open, more inclusive."

Being on the council's Disability Advisory Committee is something Maria particularly enjoys. "I never understood how hard it is to go up a step when you have to physically lift your leg up the step," she said. "All the things that are difficult I just never appreciated until I couldn't do them myself."

Maria summed up her aim as mayor: "I'm here to do my best to make sure that we use the policies we have to help people with real needs. I'm happy for residents to contact me. I'll do the best I can to help. If anyone feels that they're not getting the service they believe they're entitled to, then, yes, contact us. That's what we're here for; that's what you vote for."

Thanks Maria. We here at *Living Today* wish you well!



Randall Bouchier

⁴ Bryan and Maria have two children: son Christopher lives in London, and is married with a baby boy; their daughter lives in Melbourne with her partner.

Maria with her parents, who emigrated from Italy.



Although she sometimes felt neither completely Australian nor Italian, Maria's school days were happy.



Bryan and Maria McCarthy at their wedding in 1976



PHOTO: © NICOLE SQUELCH



PHOTO: © JANET VAN DIJK



PHOTO: © MARK SIMONDS PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO: © NICOLE SQUELCH



PHOTO: © NICOLE SQUELCH



PHOTO: © MARK SIMONDS PHOTOGRAPHY

The festival that was, and the festival that will be...

March 21 was a near-perfect day as Mooroolbark celebrated. It was a day to remember, with the Red Earth Reserve a focus of much activity as Celebrate Mooroolbark 2015 took over the community centre and surrounds. And it did take a day to get around all that was happening!

The talent quest launched the festival on Friday evening 20 March with a showcase of our high quality aspiring local performers. This year, <INH>, a five-piece local rock group, not only stunned the audience with their original composition, but entertained the crowd from the main stage at the festival as people's choice winners.

Saturday began with the colourful street parade, Auntie Dot's welcome to country and the official opening by our Mayor, Cr Maria McCarthy. The first

of many acts on stage to entertain the crowds was the Australian Youth Orchestra.

Our community groups once again provided free or low-cost activities, which made for a wonderful family outing. A few new faces were there in the market place, as well as many who have supported us over past years. The day was a great one for catching up with friends.

We thank the many members of our community who contributed to the outstanding success of the weekend, including Sharon, Helen and Mark who are new members of the hard-working Celebrate Mooroolbark Committee. Thank you to the community centre staff, the many stall holders and volunteers who all worked together to make it an event to remember and to all who supported the event by coming along on the day. We give our very special thanks to the

Yarra Ranges Council and our other generous sponsors who made the day possible.

2016 is our next event. Mark **Saturday 19 March** on your calendar today... plan to be there and also at the talent quest on Friday, 18 March. Maybe you are interested in getting more involved for next year's event—perhaps as a new sponsor, or maybe you have thought about joining the event committee. If so, please contact us at celebratemooroolbark@gmail.com.

Thank you again, Mooroolbark, for your support.

■ **Andrew Lang**
Chair – Celebrate Mooroolbark Inc

* Our cover photo shows Kate from Mt Evelyn enjoying the festival.



A Great Club—a Great Sporting Community

Mooroolbark Football Club is a dynamic and highly successful local sporting club that attracts many local football enthusiasts of all age groups—but it is much more. It is a strongly family-oriented community of players, coaches, supporters, volunteers, social members and sponsors who combine to provide a safe and encouraging—but also challenging—pathway for many of our local youth to follow.

As one long-term sponsor puts it, "The value of the family support, mentoring and guidance that a sporting team like this provides for our youth during these formative years often goes largely unrecognised or unappreciated by the broader community—but its impact is immeasurable!"

The fact that so many local players have stayed with MFC—the Mustangs—over many years and then gone on to fill leadership roles themselves clearly suggests that both they and their families do appreciate what their local club has to offer to our local youth.

Playing-coach of the reserves, Scott Dimitriou, is one example of this spirit of commitment to the Mustangs. Scott began in the under-14s, has been with the club for 17 years and this year anticipates playing his 200th game. Scott points out that, of the 22 players listed for the first game this season, 16 of them came through from the MFC juniors' ranks. The statistics were very similar for the reserves list. With so much homegrown talent, both Scott and seniors coach Paris Harvie fully anticipate that their respective teams will be competing in the finals this year.

Another, not surprising, aspect of the life of this family-oriented club is the generational connections. Two examples of this are seen in the accompanying photos: club president Doug Brumby played over 300 games for

Mooroolbark, and his son Kieran is currently enjoying his fourth year in the seniors. Doug's mum, Lesley, has been actively involved in the club as trainer and supporter since 1977. Jai Jordan began playing in the under-10s at just seven years of age. He is now in his second year in the seniors and proud to be following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Freddie, who played 96 games with MFC and is now a 'living legend' at Heights Reserve due to his many valuable contributions to club life.

So many references to MFC describe it as a "really fun place to be" and a community that provides a great family atmosphere, many social activities to enjoy together and opportunities to develop lasting friendships. But most importantly, it is seen as providing a great service to our local youth and their families as they negotiate the many challenges of these formative years.

This year the Mustangs are fielding three senior teams (seniors, reserves and under-19s) along with 14 junior teams. This equates to more than 400 players running out in Mooroolbark colours each weekend. It also means countless tireless volunteers: coaches, team managers, canteen managers, property stewards, committee members and all-rounders who give up their time to make sure these teams get on the park each weekend. It would be hard to put a number on these volunteers as so many chip in to help each and every week.

Throughout its history, Mooroolbark Mustangs have claimed two senior premierships—the most recent being in 2009—and currently play in division 2 of the Eastern Football League, the biggest metropolitan football league in Australia. The club has also claimed one reserves premiership (also 2009), a veterans premiership and 21 junior premierships.

The club also runs Auskick on Saturday mornings from 9:00 to 10:30 at Kiloran Reserve. Open to boys and girls aged 4 to 12 years, Auskick is about learning football skills for play at a junior level or just for fitness and enjoyment. With over 100 children registered, it's a fun way for children to meet new friends while they find out what's involved in playing Australia's great game.

The Mustangs look forward to another successful and enjoyable season in 2015!



Seniors coach Paris Harvie with new Mustangs recruit Carl Peterson



For some of the club's families, playing for MFC has been a proud tradition for more than one generation. Pictured (above): Keiran and Doug Brumby, and (below) Jai Jordan with his grandfather Freddie.



MFC Chaplain Appointed

An innovation for MFC this season is the appointment of its first club chaplain under the EFL Chaplaincy Initiative, which recommends that all EFL clubs retain the services of a volunteer chaplain.

MFC appointee Geoff Rayner is accredited by Sports Chaplaincy Australia which, along with its affiliates, provides sports chaplains serving in sports like AFL, netball, NRL, tennis, motor sports, surfing, cricket and lifesaving, to name a few.

Sporting clubs everywhere are giving greater recognition to the value of chaplaincy services to help ensure the personal wellbeing of the young people that the clubs engage with and to help build healthy, stable and caring sporting environments.

Geoff comes to the chaplaincy role at MFC with a strong background of pastoral care and counselling experience. He is looking forward to getting to know everyone within the club community and to being available to offer support whenever it is requested. He is also looking forward to helping the MFC committee in further development of member-care strategies and policies into the future.

Best wishes to Geoff and the club as they continue their development in this vital matter of pursuing the best possible caring environment.

For further Auskick details: register at aflauskick.com.au or contact:

AJ 0447 755 331
Emma 0433 967 923
Al 0430 438 186

For further MFC information:

Website: www.mooroolbarkfc.com.au
Facebook: www.facebook.com/MooroolbarkFooty
Twitter: @mooroolbarkfc
Email: mooroolbark@efl.org.au

PHOTOS: © DOUG LEWIS

PHOTOS: © DOUG LEWIS



An Impressive Makeover on the Cardigan Road Block

Regular customers of the previous Cardigan Road Milk Bar have recently expressed surprise and delight at the impressive makeover of their local store. The premises has recently been enlarged and renovated to provide a bright, fresh and inviting atmosphere in which to house the new **Cardigan Cellars and Xpress Mart**.



Levels of stock and types of services have been extended to offer a competitive and viable alternative to a trip to the local supermarket. The deli section and the newly added cellars are proving to be most popular with customers. These, along with the additional services of a sub news agency (which also sells postage stamps), an ATM facility, Myki services and items like gift cards and toys give proprietor Eddie Beshara the confidence that most people who enter his shop will find what they want.

If seeing the new and improved facility is an eye-opener, talking with Eddie leads to a much greater surprise. Eddie grew up in Melbourne, after arriving from Lebanon with his parents when he was just eleven years of age. For many years he has operated milk bars, first in Eltham then Noble Park before coming to Mooroolbark in 2000.



Eddie and May Beshara with their children

Although Eddie he has always been very content with his life in the local business, there has been another, very significant side to his life. Over a number of years he worked part time to complete a PhD in Philosophy and currently spends 25 percent of his working hours teaching

history at Melbourne University, where he lectures in History of Religion and the Middle East. That is certainly a unique combination of vocations!

In the shop, the way Eddie relates to his customers is a delight to see. Despite his Lebanese beginnings he has mastered the Aussie art of greeting people with a big smile, some typical banter and a friendly 'put-down'. He comments, "My customers would think I was not well if I didn't abuse them somewhat when they enter my shop. We have a lot of fun together."

Eddie and his wife May have three grown children. He says, "They have all gained valuable knowledge and experience by working in the shop over the years." Their eldest son Aby has graduated in human resources, Anthony is studying accountancy at RMIT and their daughter Alai is currently in year 12 at Mount Lilydale Mercy College.

Eddie says that each member of the family has enjoyed making Mooroolbark home and greatly appreciates the community life that they have experienced here. Through the business, the family supports local community activities and charities as an expression of their appreciation of all that life in the Mooroolbark community has brought to them.

Next time you are in the vicinity, why not call in and strike up a conversation with Eddie? You never know what you might learn. But be prepared for a little friendly 'Eddie abuse' as he gets to know you!

Doug Lewis

PHOTOS: © EDDIE BESHARA



Max Performance Fitness

11 Paul Street Croydon
0414 095 644

Group Fitness & Personal Training



Adriana and Michael

How is your health and fitness? Do you need some inspiration and guidance to achieve your health and fitness goals? If so, then you need to come down to Max Performance Fitness (located near the Five Ways roundabout) and see Michael. Michael is a certified personal trainer and the owner of Max Performance Fitness.

At Max Performance Fitness, Michael—in partnership with his wife Adriana—offers both group exercise and one-on-one personal training for anyone who wants to feel better, more confident, lose weight or even outrun the kids! Three free group training sessions are available as a trial to give you the opportunity to experience the benefits of exercise.

Michael has been involved in physical fitness from the early age of 13. With interests in AFL and martial arts, he began to utilise various forms of strength and cardiovascular training to improve his own physical conditioning. He has a passion for weightlifting, Muay Thai kickboxing and also tennis—he is currently president of the Warrandyte Tennis Club.

Michael's journey into the fitness industry started when he worked at an office job. To keep active, he started running and boxing during his lunch break. His colleagues expressed interest in participating and soon he was organising regular lunchtime fitness sessions. He soon became aware of the improved health and fitness of several of his colleagues. Right before his eyes he could see the results of inspiring people to exercise. This was something exciting and worthwhile—and the start of his mission to inspire as many people as possible to transform their bodies and their lives.

Michael realises that today we tend to be more sedentary and that many people have jobs that require them to be sitting for long periods, causing their general physical activity levels to decline. Max Performance Fitness offers an opportunity to anyone looking to reinvigorate their health and fitness through exercise.

Whereas group training adds the fun of the social element to training, personal training is more specific and all about you! Michael believes

it is very important to teach the correct exercise training technique and as a result membership and group class sizes are limited to ensure everyone gets proper coaching. An interesting turn of events is the demand for boxing—to such an extent that Tuesday nights are solely reserved for that training discipline. Both men and women enjoy boxing because it allows for a high-energy training session that's very different.

At the community level, Max Performance Fitness is actively supporting a young marathon runner for her personal event and in the near future they intend to introduce outdoor training as an interesting addition to the standard training program.

If you are interested in the personalised touch for your health and fitness why not give Max Performance Fitness a call for a check-up? You've got nothing to lose and much to gain!

Barry Austin

PHOTO: © BARRY AUSTIN

Riding the Rails

Mooroolbark Miniature Railway



Riding the trains is a serious business for Elijah.

As the miniature train chugs softly around the track, three-year-old Elijah sits quietly on his seat behind the driver, wide-eyed and solemn-faced. When the train stops unexpectedly, Elijah leans forward to gaze at the tracks ahead, his mouth open in surprise and his face a study in concentration. Although he rides the miniature railway often, Elijah still seems to find the experience fascinating. According to his mother, he will often spend an entire day on the miniature trains. He is particularly fond of the yellow rail tractor Artie, owned by club member Richard Knight.

Elijah is one of many regulars, both adults and children, who visit the Mooroolbark and District Miniature Railway and Steam Club—known as Mooroolbark Miniature Railway or MMR. The club, which has been operating for over 30 years and is still going strong, was formed in 1980. After a great deal of digging and construction at the chosen site at Kiloran Reserve in Hawthory Road, the track was officially opened for public rides in April 1983.

The fourth Sunday of each month is known to the club members as “public run day” and is the day the railway is open to the public from 11 am to 4 pm. A ride costs \$2.50 per person, with children under four riding free.

The railway tracks meander around a green, leafy park which has many purpose-built landmarks such as a train station, bridge, and tunnel. A large central grassy area is the perfect spot for groups to have picnics or parties on public run days. For large groups, discounted tickets are available for bulk purchase. In addition, private parties can be booked for specific dates.

On any particular public run day, there may be between three and eight trains running at a time. Most of the trains are internal combustion, but a steam train is run on some days also—much to the delight of many of the children, who love the chuff-chuff of the engine. Children also like to make sure they get a ride on each type or colour of train!



Darren Lark eases a trainload of passengers into the station.



MMR club president Paul Hopwood drives the V-Line train, which he built himself.

According to MMR club president Paul Hopwood, riding the miniature railway doesn't appeal only to children. “We get all ages, starting from a babe-in-arms through to people who have one foot in the box,” laughed Paul. “Retired people come along in groups and request a ride on a particular loco,” he said. “We're talking 70 to 80 year olds.”

For the 40 or so club members, both male and female, there is more to MMR than the public run days—there are monthly meetings, as well as days set aside for projects such as track maintenance, gardening and lawn mowing. Many of today's club members were there right from club's foundation, or are related to founding members. Peter Handscomb was one of the first members and he is now joined at MMR by his son Travis. Media officer Renae Jones, who maintains the website and Facebook page, is the daughter of another founding member, Peter Jones.

Paul describes the club as “essentially a specialised Men's Shed” because many of its activities are those in which many men have a particular interest. Paul says there is a strong relationship between what happens in a Men's Shed and what happens at MMR—for example, the opportunity for passing on skills and knowledge in engine-making or design to one another. Within the club, members have diverse interests; some are interested in engineering or electronics, while others prefer driving the trains. There are also some who enjoy maintenance projects, manning the kiosk, or just the social side of the club. According to Paul, there's always time for “a coffee and a gas bag.”

Running the railway is very much a DIY project for the club. While some of the trains are purchased, many others are made by the members themselves—from the initial design and construction of fibreglass and metal right through to the final steps of painting and upholstering. Building and maintaining the landmarks, tracks, signals and other equipment is also done by the members. Club vice president Peter Handscomb said, “All the money we earn goes straight back into the club for upgrading facilities.” Paul Hopwood agreed, saying: “What you see today is 30 years of progressive improvement.”

With the dedicated efforts of so many backing it, the miniature railway looks set to continue for at least another 30 years!

New members are always welcome at the club. If you would like to join, book a special event or come to a public run day, please check out the details on Facebook or MMR's website: facebook.com/MooroolbarkMiniatureRailway or mmr.org.au

Janet Van Dijk



**Mooroolbark
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Everyday Heroes

Today's celebrity culture influences who we and our children admire—but perhaps we should look more closely to see who really deserves our respect.

A quick flick through the latest magazines and newspapers will soon show us which people are currently in the limelight. We can easily learn more details about these individuals than we may want to know—what they wear, who they date and what they eat. So much emphasis is placed on this small pool of celebrity highfliers who capture the attention of the media, and hence the population.

Why do we celebrate these people? Are they worthy of our attention? They are usually in the media because of their

lives, to send a craft into space so we can all share a view of our amazing galaxy.

What about the heroes who have been to war to bravely fight for their country, loyally supporting their fellow soldiers and demonstrating the Aussie value of mateship?

What about the teachers in our schools and TAFE's who spend their time teaching our kids so they can make a living and support their own families one day? Then there are volunteers who feed the homeless—they are often people who are struggling to get enough

trying to make ends meet because the government support just isn't there anymore or is grossly inadequate? And yet, our society can find enough money to pay a ball-kicker millions of dollars.

Our young people are also doing some amazing things. A young Victorian established the Thankyou Water concept and a range of healthy, Australian-made snack foods. Proceeds provide clean water and other necessities for developing nations.¹ Projects like this change the lives of the recipients *and* the generations that follow. These young people have

they can accomplish with their lives. It's a tough job to capture the attention of our children and instil in them a desire to give and serve.

What can we do?

How do we begin to place a value on the good that so many people do every day—efforts that go largely unnoticed? Or worse, are ignored even though so many benefit from their selfless actions? We can help to refocus our families and communities on those who deserve the limelight, those who offer their time to benefit others much less fortunate.



PHOTO: © STOCKVAULT/IMERELIZEI



PHOTO: © DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

colourful personalities, clothes and behaviour. Many engage in destructive relationships, abuse drugs, lie, cheat and take advantage of their status in ways that are grossly unfair and often immoral. If we reflect on what we truly value in our families and our communities, we might decide to shift our gaze and admiration to those who really deserve it.

Let us notice and value the people who are worthy of appreciation: the people who go into a cyclone-devastated area and help people who have lost everything; those who toil endlessly to find a cure for a debilitating disease, or those who devote their efforts, even their

work to feed themselves, let alone their families.

Many charities are seeking to help the donors engage with the recipients of aid. They might do this through newsletters, contributions of time and physical support, or testimonies from people whose lives have been turned around and are now in a position to help others—the helped become the helpers.

As a society, we depend heavily on numerous charities to support and care for the needy, sick or injured. No matter what age we are, we may all be needy, sick or injured at some point. How many phone calls do we get every week from well-meaning charities

worked out what's important and how they *can* make a difference. That's truly amazing and certainly something to be celebrated!

Perhaps thanks should go also to the teachers and parents who no doubt inspired and encouraged these young people. Role models influence how young people grow and mature and can help them develop a sense of what's important. Sadly, many of society's role models demonstrate a sense of selfishness that cuts deeply into the true measure of what people can be and what

¹ Check out their products in the supermarket. They taste great and are not overloaded with sugar, and your money will go to a good cause!

Give credit where credit is due:

The times we live in are not what they seem. We are told that things have never been better. And yet, job losses mount every day. Prices go up and we have less left over after paying the bills. Housing is ridiculously expensive. There is a natural tendency to stop giving and keep what little we have. However, those who think about the issues faced by the needy and the unfortunate are the ones digging deeper. They keenly feel the need to continue helping and supporting an increasing number who need a hand to get them on their feet again.

Filter the media: Let's think carefully about what we

watch as families on television. Some shows are not very uplifting and certainly don't provide much in the way of inspirational viewing. They may seem entertaining, but after the laughs are over we are often left with a shallow view of what's important and beneficial to society. Don't let the media shape our young minds and their destiny. These effects might initially be unnoticeable but can accumulate over time and become part of who we are.

Recognise our capacity for change: Our destiny is *not* predetermined. Our destiny is *not* hereditary. Yes, our destiny is *influenced* by our surroundings, our families and the worldview that gets the most airtime in the vicinity of home, school etc. Yet we can change our future! This idea was portrayed beautifully in the 2001 movie *A Knight's Tale*. You might enjoy getting the movie and watching it together as a family.

Help young people make a difference: It can be difficult for young people to know how to contribute to causes they feel strongly about. They will usually need the support of adults to bring their ideas to fruition. Some volunteer organisations are well equipped to involve young helpers and have measures in place to ensure their safety. Young people may also lack the confidence to volunteer on their own—going with them or inviting them to participate in your volunteer work can enable them to experience the rewards of giving back to their community.

Let's celebrate those who really make a valuable contribution to our world. Let's cheer them on—with a financial boost, our time or even a word of encouragement. Look out for the good being done and help others to notice as well. Avoid the imposters who want to us to believe they've got something special. The more we, and our kids, realise the difference, the better off we will all be.



Steve Steel



PHOTO: © DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

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What Good Shall I Do This Day? by Joseph Tkach from the *Speaking of Life* series <https://www.gci.org/spol>

As a young man, Benjamin Franklin developed and kept to a rigorous daily routine in an attempt at self-improvement. Every day he rose at five in the morning and asked himself a single question, "What good shall I do this day?"

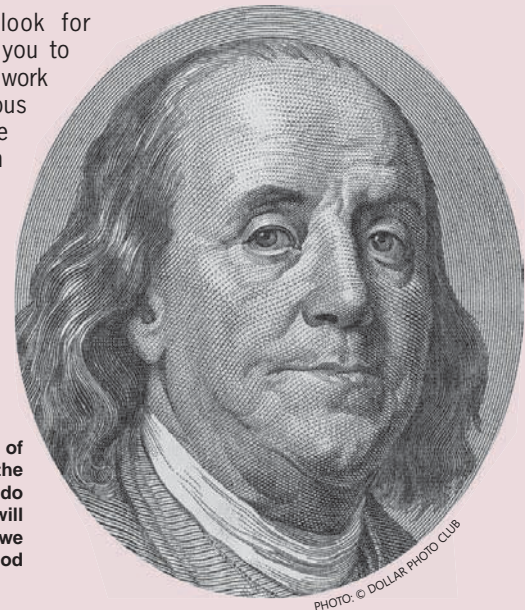
That's an intriguing question, but Christians could modify it to read something like this, "What good is God doing around me, and how can I join in?"

It's easy to be overwhelmed by daily life. We have so much going on around us: paying bills, taking our children to school, and going to and from work. Then factor in making meals, keeping up with our favourite TV shows or reading another book and it's tough to find the time to do anything. However, participation and involvement with what our kind and generous God is doing is a crucial part of our growing spiritually. Joining with him as he "does good" is one way that we become more and more like him. In the New Testament James tells us, "Do what God's teaching says; don't just listen and do nothing. When you only sit and listen, you are fooling yourselves... But whoever catches a glimpse of the revealed counsel of God—the free life!—even out of the corner of his eye, and sticks with it, is no distracted scatterbrain but a man or woman of action. That person will find delight and affirmation in the action." (James 1:22, 25).

Now, don't get me wrong. God has already been working in us. But just because this is true it doesn't mean we're to sit back on our laurels, so to speak. Instead, we're enabled to join in the good things that he is continually working out. And our cooperation with God is part of an

increasingly rich and abundant life.

So each day look for opportunities around you to joyfully and freely go to work alongside our generous and great God. You'll be amazed at what He can do in you—and through you—as you partner with Him.



Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States, strove to do good every day. We will grow spiritually when we actively partner with God to do good things.

PHOTO: © DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

MOOROOLBARK REMEMBERS LEST WE FORGET THE CENTENARY OF THE GALLIPOLI LANDINGS



PHOTO: © BARBARA AUSTIN

It was a moving ceremony for young and old alike

Despite the wet weather, hundreds of Mooroolbark residents were at Hookey Park on Saturday 25 April to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli.

Brightly coloured umbrellas and raincoats set the scene for a moving ceremony sponsored by the Lions Club of Mooroolbark and conducted by Chris Clifton, honorary chaplain of the Lilydale RSL. Chris opened the service by saying the gathering was not to celebrate "but to commemorate" Anzac Day.

Sergeant Lee Nichols recited the *Anzac Requiem* and said, "the Anzacs did not receive the thanks they deserved."

Notably, young people from local schools played an important part, reading the scriptures and giving the prayer. James Cummings from Oxley Christian College delivered a thoughtful insight into the younger person's perspective of Anzac Day and the Honourable Tony Smith gave the Anzac Day address. A local bugler, Tom Steele, played the *Last Post* and *Reveille*.

Towards the end of the laying of the wreaths a woman and her young granddaughter walked hand in hand to lay a sprig of rosemary among the beautiful wreaths—a poignant moment, showing how the young and the old alike are affected by the horrors of war.

To conclude the service, everyone sang the national anthem, accompanied by the Croydon Brass Band.

Barbara Austin



PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN

Anzac Day has been officially honoured across Australia and New Zealand for almost a hundred years. This photo shows a 1917 commemoration in Australia

A New Beginning

For most of their lives, Stuart and Leila had no idea that the other existed. But now, after a lifetime of experiences lived separately, they are planning to live the rest of their lives together.

Stuart Fraser and Leila Straub met a couple of years ago at the retirement village in which they both reside. Stuart had been living in his unit there for about 11 years while Leila was new to the community. They met at a village morning tea, and according to Leila, "One thing led to another. We started talking and then we started walking together and we became good friends."

Stuart and Leila had a lot to talk about—many decades to catch up on. Leila had been a seamstress before marrying and raising her children, and in subsequent years she managed a caravan park and worked on the family farm. Stuart, who had also married and raised children,



Stuart and Leila Fraser at their wedding in February this year

PHOTO: © DANIEL WRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

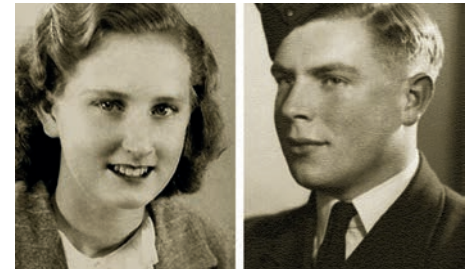
has a degree in business administration and has had a variety of business roles, including a position as lecturer at RMIT.

When they met, Stuart was becoming deeply interested in Christianity. Although he had grown up in a Christian household and had been a Church of England altar boy, he hadn't attended church as an adult. In contrast, Leila had been an active Christian for nearly six decades. She was no longer able to drive due to an injury, but went to Mooroolbark Baptist Church when she could get a ride. At other times, she attended church services at the retirement village. Leila and Stuart soon found they had their faith and the scriptures as a shared interest, among other things. "She can talk a lot," smiled Stuart, before adding, "And so can I." The two took long walks, talking and getting to know one another.

At first the couple didn't want their new relationship to be under the scrutiny of the whole retirement village, so there was quite a bit of subterfuge. They would arrange to go for a walk, meeting as if by accident. "He would ring me up and say 'I will meet you up at the point'," said Leila. Then, when Stuart began driving them to church in Mooroolbark, secrecy became a bit more difficult. "He would drive around and pick me up," said Leila, "but we were trying to pretend we didn't even know each other."

Before long, they found themselves engaged—much to their own surprise! "We're both shocked too," said Leila. "It was the last thing we expected." Stuart added, "We can't remember who asked the question."

Before meeting each other, both Leila and Stuart had been alone for many years. Leila had been widowed for over 20 years and Stuart had been a widower for more than four decades. Their families (Stuart's son and three daughters, and Leila's daughter and son) were thrilled, according



Leila and Stuart had each lived a lifetime of experiences before they met each other.

to Leila. "Both families have been so supportive; they have all been so happy for us."

The couple married on 14 February this year in the Mooroolbark Baptist Church, surrounded by family and friends. Almost all family members on both sides—children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren—were able to make it to the wedding, despite the fact that many of them live overseas or in places as far-flung as Broome and Darwin. Their children and grandchildren organised the wedding. "It was lovely," said Leila.

Until it was pointed out to them, the Frasers didn't realise that their wedding day was also Valentine's Day. "I've never had a Valentine's card and I didn't even get one this year!" protested Leila.

Stuart and Leila have recently moved into Stuart's unit at the retirement village, after staying elsewhere while their home was completely refurbished with new paint, carpets, and curtains. "I had been living in the unit before that—I thought it was pretty good," said Stuart mildly.

The Frasers have many plans for their life together—more of those long walks, starting a vegetable garden, and trips to Broome and Darwin for family weddings.

Leila is 92 years old to Stuart's 89 years—"and he's not letting me forget it, either," said Leila. At one point in the conversation, Stuart and Leila had a minor disagreement about which was better: previous generations, or now. "We don't always agree on everything," Leila laughed. "And just as well we don't... it would be pretty boring." Then, turning to her husband, she said: "Well, when you think about it, Stuart, we might be talking about different generations. I'm three years older than you, so it's another generation." Stuart hastened to point out that the age difference is actually three years and three months.

No, this is not going to be a boring marriage!

Janet Van Dijk

FREE FAMILY FILM NIGHT

Robotics prodigy Hiro lives in the city of San Fransokyo. Next to his older brother, Tadashi, Hiro's closest companion is Baymax, a robot whose sole purpose is to take care of people. When a devastating turn of events throws Hiro into the middle of a dangerous plot, he transforms Baymax and his other friends into a band of high-tech heroes. (108 minutes - Rated PG)



All Welcome—Mooroolbark Community Centre

Wednesday 8 July 2015

Film commences at 7:30 pm

Free ice-cream, tea & coffee available

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

Bookings commence from Wednesday 17 June

To reserve your tickets* phone 9726 5488
or book online at ach.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

*If you have not made a booking, please come anyway, as any uncollected tickets may be reissued at 7:15 pm—there are always seats available.

Jim Blundell

Last issue I introduced you to James (Jim) Blundell, whose memories of Mooroolbark span nearly nine decades. Born in 1925, Jim was raised in Mooroolbark, at that time a quiet rural area. At the conclusion of the last article, Jim—having reached the required standards in touch typing and Morse code—was on board a ship bound for active service in New Guinea.



Jim at 18 years old, not long after being drafted

“And that wasn’t a good time then, to be going up there,” said Jim. “There were little Japanese submarines ripping round sinking boats here and there. They were bombing throughout the islands and New Guinea, and they even had a go at Darwin.

“I arrived in New Guinea at about the same time as the US Army. They came in with their air force so we had to build aerodromes—about fourteen all together, of which we had three. And I was sent to a place called Nadzab, about 20 miles inland from Lae. Because of the threat of bombing, it’s too dangerous to have your signals base at the aerodrome, so the signals personnel operated on their own further out into the bush.”

On arrival, Jim discovered why he had learned to touch type. He was told, “You being a high speed bloke, there’s your receiver; it’s the best we’ve got. We got this stuff for you; you can send this a bit quicker than we can.” Jim described how a small machine was used to send messages: “You type your message onto the machine and a tape goes through as you’re typing and each letter comes out like Morse code. I typed all the messages as quickly as I could and in between you’d be checking to see if you could get through to Melbourne. They only had two frequencies that were useable. And when I got through to Melbourne I used to say: “Are you ready for high speed?” “Yes, go!” and I’d fire these things off and they’d go through the machine at 120 words a minute.

“I also received a lot of communications. There was a lot of reading—a helluva lot of work compared to what the others were doing. But that didn’t matter; it kept me out of trouble.

“I went up there in 1943. By 1944 the whole business sort of collapsed and the signals unit was closed down. We were able to do a bit of relief work in some of the other islands. The best job I had was in Lae. I got the job of looking after the transmitters, which were out in the bush. People seemed to like me. I was out in the bush looking after two D6 motors that generated enough power to run the signals station. Strangely, no one ever asked me if I knew anything about them—they just gave me the job to do!”

Jim enjoyed doing odd jobs around the base, and also started cutting hair for two shillings a cut. “When I went from Nadzab down to Lae someone said, ‘Hey! I know you from Nadzab. You cut hair. You can cut mine.’ They supplied me with boxes for the men to sit on and bits of rag to wrap around them and I must’ve done around 40 that day. They couldn’t believe their eyes, a bloke in there cutting hair. Without having had haircuts for some time, the men looked just terrible!

“There were times when I had to work really hard, but we often had time on our hands. At Lae a big New South Welshman and I made a boat from the belly tank of a plane and we found a little motor from somewhere. We decided we’d launch the boat in the big river below the aerodrome. When it rained the Markham River flooded pretty badly and discoloured water flowed a long way out to sea.

“We picked the wrong day to launch our boat.

Because the river was in flood, we were swept out to sea, where a wave caught us side on and over we went. We tried to get the boat back to shore as best we could, and, as we were paddling away in the murky sea water we looked up and found we were staring straight into the face of a giant turtle! It gave us a fright! We eventually got the boat back to shore but lost a bit of enthusiasm after that, particularly as I couldn't swim.

"Towards the end of 1944 and into 1945 we got to play a bit of sport," remembered Jim. "If you were in the team you didn't have to do your Morse. I had to play ruck. I had a good spring. I also trained for the athletics, winning the 880 yards and the triple jump. It wasn't a bad life, I thought."

After the war, Jim was told he could train for any job he liked. He was hoping to do a diesel course, but it was booked out, so he got a job with the post office. "It was about the time that teleprinters started to appear. That was right down my alley because I could touch type. I'd find myself typing: 'Dear mum, or dear sweetheart, arrived safely... and this and that... and send money!' I'd perhaps do 50 or 60 telegrams straight off— boomp! —without a stop. I think they wondered what they'd struck. As the post office was a bank sub-branch also, I was soon given the job of opening new bank accounts, and handling banking for customers."

"During that time, I bought a good English motor bike—a Levis. And it was fast! One of the blokes got himself a Norton. It must have cost him a fortune because he had it done up like a brand new machine, straight out of the shop—not a khaki, ex-army one at all. He asked me to come out for a spin on the bikes. We were just motoring along. He said: 'You flat out?' 'No.' He said: 'You sure?' I opened up the Levis and away I went. After a while I slowed down and when he caught up he said he'd had enough. His bike couldn't keep up. He was disappointed and that was the end of bikes, I think, for him.

"The post master was a keen shooter and encouraged me to go and do a bit of rabbit shooting, so off I went and returned with half a dozen rabbits. There were too many for me, so I had to try and get rid of them. I said to one of the married city blokes, 'You ever tried rabbit?' 'No, never had it.' I said: 'Here's a few. Try them out.' A few days later, I said: 'Oh, how did the rabbits go?' And he said, a bit sheepishly, 'we never got round to eating them; we couldn't figure out how to pluck them!' One time I arrived back on base from shooting, and the guard at Crib Point pulled me up and said, 'What have you got in your bag?' I said, 'Rabbits.' 'Smartarse,' he said. 'Give us a look at them.' I took them into the office and tipped them out for him and there they were, bloody rabbits. 'See, I told you they were rabbits.' That didn't go down too well!

"I got pretty good at my job and they started to post me to other parts of the state to relieve other postal officers, but I soon tired of the travelling—and shifting all my things via motorbike was awkward and not too safe."

At that time, Jim looked for other ways of making money. The first couple of attempts—as a cartage contractor and then trying to cut and sell firewood—didn't go so well, but

eventually he found work with the Country Roads Board building a bridge at Thornton up near Eildon. Not too long after that first job, he responded to a head office call for men to train as overseers.

Jim was fortunate to be tutored on the job by a Scottish foreman: "He was a good bloke. He showed me a lot. I got to learn how to level roads properly and I finished up getting my own gang and that was quite a bit to tackle for a ratbag like me. I got a big four-wheel drive travelling kitchen, additional equipment for an offsider, portable showers, and some two-man huts and I was sent up to Alexandra. Up there, there was rock everywhere and I learned how to drill and place explosive charges. As they didn't give me a man to load the gelignite and to fire them, I had to learn to do all that along with the levelling. And I also learned how to drive dozers. I think there wasn't too much I didn't learn up there."

In 1963 Jim took up the position of Superintendent of Works with Croydon where

he remained until his retirement. Jim still lives in Taylor Road, Mooroolbark with his wife, Joan. The two of them met through mutual friends whilst Jim was working at Eildon. Joan had grown up in Box Hill South, and after leaving secondary school, she had studied at Zercho's Business College and travelled each day from Box Hill to the city, where she worked. They knew each other off and on for quite a while, before marrying in 1963 and having two children, Christina and Murray.

...and so it was that I met James and Joan as they participated at the unveiling of the new plaques at the War Memorial in Hookey Park last November, and learned a little of their fascinating story!



Randall Bouchier



The wedding of James and Joan Blundell, 5 October 1963

PHOTO: SUPPLIED



Jim and Joan at the dedication of the Hookey Park war memorials in November 2014. As the local area's oldest surviving veteran of World War II, Jim had a special part in the ceremonies.

PHOTO: © CHRIS WRIGHT



MOOROOLBARK LIONS— SERVING OUR COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

We Serve

You may only ever think of the Mooroolbark Lions Club in connection with sausage sizzles, the ANZAC Day service and the Carols by Candlelight, but there is more to this club than meets the eye!



Some of the current Lions members at the recent Celebrate Mooroolbark festival.



Handing over the house built by the Mooroolbark Lions in Orange Farms, Gauteng, South Africa.

Our local Lions may be a small club, but it is a proud member of Lions Clubs International, the world's largest service organisation. In fact, with 1.35 million members in 45,000 clubs throughout 206 countries and geographic areas they have many, many friends!

Current Mooroolbark Lions President Rob Law says, "When you see that Lions emblem on the side of the road when you enter a new town or community, you can be sure that Lions are actively helping to make the community a better place." It is no different here in Mooroolbark. Since its inception, Mooroolbark Lions has raised over \$1.3 million for community projects, serving the local community and beyond. Lions members are all people of goodwill who care about their community. They are interested in its welfare, its health, its standards and its progress. They do not wait for regressive conditions to be solved by the government or 'somebody else.' The Lions believe that people, joined together, can initiate and carry out programs that will benefit our community. Everywhere they work, Lions make friends: with children who need eyeglasses, with victims of bushfires and with people they may never meet.

"The Rotunda in Hookey Park, the Jim Fuller Home and a house for a child-headed family in South Africa are all fantastic physical monuments to the hard work of Mooroolbark Lions members over the years, but it is the unseen assistance we give to members of the community that makes it all worthwhile,"

said Rob. "Over the years we have funded and supported hundreds, if not thousands, of less fortunate members of our community. There is nothing better than seeing the smile on a child's face after they have just come back from a camp that they did not think they would be able to attend, or the joy and relief of a parent when we are able to assist them to obtain medical equipment for their child that they could not afford on their own."

Rob added, "We are currently busy with a number of community projects and we need help. We are desperately in need of more members so we can continue the good work. You don't have to be retired or have a lot of spare time. If you have a skill, any skill, we need you. Our club meets twice a month in the evening and the only other time you may have to give up is when we are busy with a project. Membership is open to anyone in the community and becoming a Lions Club member gives you the opportunity to make new friends and professional connections, and to lead projects that make our community a better place to live."

If you want to get a better feel of how the Mooroolbark Lions impact our local community, are seeking assistance with a community project, are interested in joining or want to contribute in some way, please contact George Nantes on 9726 5998 or leave a message on the Mooroolbark Lions' Facebook page.

Doug Lewis

MOOROOLBARK'S SOCIAL SENIORS

If you had six children, what would you want to do in your spare time when they had all grown up and left home? Go on a cruise? Take up a hobby?

For Margaretha (known as Margaret) Derksen, the answer was joining the Mooroolbark Senior Citizens Club. Margaret became president of the club last year when Bev Dans passed away following a brief illness with cancer. Bev had been president for only one year.



Margaret came to Australia from Holland with her parents in 1956, but considers herself Australian even though she speaks with a strong Dutch accent. She met and married her husband when she was sixteen and they have six children, 17 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren—all living in Victoria.

She was the social secretary of the senior citizens group for six years and organised trips away and other social occasions, but had to give it up when she started getting panic attacks, mainly due to concern about her

husband who is very ill and occasionally has to spend time in hospital. However, Margaret enjoys the company of her friends at the club and credits them with her decision to remain part of the group.

The club is run by a committee and Margaret emphasises that it is a team effort. She encourages everyone to participate so that on days when she is unable to be there, someone else can readily take over.

The club has many exercise programs, such as line dancing, tai chi, indoor bowls four times a week, and snooker. A fee of \$1 is charged for these activities. The club also partners with Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship, allowing MCF to use the hall for 'People's Pantry' which provides a three-course meal every second Friday to the homeless and the lonely. The Christadelphians hold their service there on Sundays and the hall is also leased for celebrations such as birthdays and anniversaries.

At the time of this interview, the club was looking forward to a bus trip to Ballarat to view the magnificent begonias in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, with lunch included. In March this year they enjoyed a five-day tour of



Adelaide which cost \$500 including bus fare, accommodation, food and day trips. These trips all help to develop lasting friendships.

Mooroolbark Senior Citizens Club is the largest club in the outer eastern region, with a membership of around 240 people. In recent months they have lost a few members but are now adding two or three members a week. Of the current group, the youngest is 68 and the oldest is 94, but there are many in their 80s.

Those who would like to join the club are welcome from age 60 onwards, for an annual fee of \$6. A first visit for potential members is free—so come in and see if it is what you are looking for!

Those interested in becoming involved may contact club secretary June Simmons during working hours on 9726 7095, or after hours on 9725 7730.

Barbara Austin

An Opera and an Orchestra for School Holidays

Mooroolbark Community Centre has created a school holiday program to suit children of all ages, with a classical concert for the youngest ones, a dance party for teenagers and an opera for the whole family.

Paddington Bear's First Concert on 12 July is a unique chance to introduce the young people in your life to classical music. The concert has been developed by Whitehorse Orchestra especially for children aged ten and under. A full orchestra will perform in the Red Earth Theatre, accompanied by storytelling, a projection display and Paddington Bear himself.

Whitehorse Orchestra is passionate about inspiring children to engage with classical music and was one of the first orchestras in Victoria to develop a classical music program for children twenty years ago.

Opera Australia returns to Mooroolbark Community Centre on 3 July to present *Hansel and Gretel*. The much-loved Grimm fairytale will be brought to life with an enchanting set, colourful costuming and the climactic music of Engelbert Humperdinck. Through the telling of a familiar favourite story, the production of *Hansel and Gretel* makes opera accessible for children and adults.

Teenagers can look forward to Glitch Dance Party on 17 July. Hosted by Yarra Ranges Council Youth Services, the dance party will feature DJs playing house, dance and dubstep music in the Red Earth Theatre and big screen games in the gallery. Glitch Dance Party is fully supervised, with no pass outs and is strictly drug, alcohol and smoke free.

Also running throughout the June/July holidays will be Mooroolbark Community Centre's popular art workshops.

Bookings for the school holiday program are now open. To book: call 1300 368 333 or visit www.culturetracks.info.

Sally Williams

PHOTO: OPERA AUSTRALIA

JAPARA HOUSE

DURHAM ROAD KILSYTH

Japara Living and Learning Centre was officially opened in February this year. Housed in a magnificent state-of-the-art community facility developed by the Yarra Ranges Council at the cost of \$5million, the centre is well worth a visit to see just what it offers. One cannot fail to be impressed by this attractive and highly functional facility and the extensive range of programs and services being provided.

In 1980, Montrose Community House was officially named Japara after an Aboriginal leader who was instrumental in bringing tribes together. At the time, Japara House summed up its purpose as that of bringing people together in an atmosphere of friendship to share skills, experiences and interests. Over 35 years later, that purpose is unchanged, but Japara has grown from a small group of passionate and committed volunteers to the professionally run, not-for-profit community organisation that it is today.

Councillor Len Cox, who opened the buildings with Mayor Maria McCarthy and Japara president Ray Yates, expressed his excitement at seeing the project completed. He said, "It has been my long-term ambition to see a major community centre established in Kilsyth. I know that it will be of great value to the community for many years to come."

Japara CEO Joanne Scanlan spoke of her very rewarding 20-year career, working with not-for-profit community organisations. She said, "I first experienced this sort of community support over 20 years ago at Yarra Valley Community House. I was a young mum who felt warmly welcomed and greatly supported by all involved with the playgroup I had joined. I was immediately 'sold' on the value of this type of community support. Today, I am more convinced than ever of the need for that support in our current society and, at Japara, we strive to make this a reality in all that we do."



CEO Joanne Scanlan

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED



Japara House relocated to this magnificent state-of-the-art facility in February

incorporates The Bridge Community Garden Centre, across the road. Within the main buildings there are a number of 'living and learning spaces' which are used to accommodate the wide range of quality programs and courses on offer. In addition, these multi-purpose areas provide a home for the Kilsyth Senior Citizens Club and the Yarra Valley U3A and are also available for hire by other community groups and organisations.

Japara's stated mission is 'to strive to provide accessible and affordable educational, recreational and vocational opportunities for life-long learning and to offer social support appropriate to the changing needs of our community'. Joanne stressed the need to constantly engage with and carefully listen to the community to discern the ever-changing needs of our society.

Interested community members who are looking for more information are cordially invited to drop in at Japara to view the facilities, check out the programs and activities, find out about volunteer opportunities or discuss possible partnerships with other community groups.

Further information is available at www.japarahouse.com.au or by phone on 9728 3587

Doug Lewis

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 pm. Oxley College stadium. Details: phone 9726 8111 or www.lmc.org.au
Monday evenings each week	Scottish Country Dancing: Mondays 8 pm (except public holidays). Beginners and experienced. Minimal charges. St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. Enquiries: 9876 9206.
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 Jeanne Wilson: 9726 9858.
Thursdays during school term	Music Together program: 0-5 years. Run by trained music therapist. St Margaret's Uniting Church 9:45 am. Morning tea & playtime included. \$12.50 per session per family. Call Yvonne: 9726 9347.
Thursday evenings each week	Maroondah TOWN Club: (Take Off Weight Naturally). Weekly, starting at 6:30 pm. St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. More information: Marcia 0409 170 731.
Wednesdays during term time	Kilsyth Primary School Playgroup: Painting, story time, activities and games for children birth - 3½ years. 9:15 am. More info: 9725 4320 or www.kilsythps.vic.edu.au.
Mon and Thursdays during school term	Sing Move Shake: Fun with music for toddlers. Edinburgh College Primary, Edinburgh Rd. 10:00-10:45 am. Casual drop-in classes, \$6.00 per session. More info: 0438 596 232.
June - August	Yarra Ranges Council Immunisation Sessions: June 2, 10, 23, July 7, 8, 28, August 4, 12, 25. Mooroolbark Community Centre.
11 June onwards	Mooroolbark Theatre Group—Neil Simon's Rumours: opens Thurs 11 June for 7 nights over 2 weeks. \$18 (\$16 concession). Includes supper. 7:30 for 8 pm. Bookings essential: Arline 9726 4282.
13 June	Oxley Kids Early Learning Centre Open Day: 2-4 pm. Christian ELC and preschool, located on the same beautiful property as Oxley Christian College. Info: www.oxleykids.vic.edu.au or phone 9727 9200.
13 June	Forum—Preventing Violence Against Women Is Everyone's Business: 10 am-12:30 pm. St Francis in the Fields, 224 Hull Road Mooroolbark. Facilitator: Dr Ree Boddé. Cost: \$10. Contact: 9761 9242.
21 June	Pipe Organ Concert with Gordon Atkinson: 2:30 pm. St Francis in the Fields Anglican Church Mooroolbark. \$15 (\$10 concession) payable at the door. More information: 9761 9242.
34 July 10-11 July	ARK Theatre: Farmer Will Swap Combine Harvester for Wife and Down Came a Jumbuck. Lilydale Heights College PAC. Fri 8 pm, Sat 2 pm & 8 pm. \$20 incl. refreshments. Info: www.arktheatremelb.com
5 July	Singularity Sings for RYDA: Trial by Jury & HMS Pinafore. 2:30 pm St Margaret's Uniting Church. Admission: \$5 donation. Enquiries: Doug Williams 9726 6968 or doug@blackdouglas.com.au
26 July	Annual Community Tree Planting: 1:00-3:30 pm, reserve near Rolling Hills Primary School, Landscape Drive, Mooroolbark. More details: mooroolbark.org.au
Mooroolbark Community Centre and Montrose Town Centre	
The following special events will be held at Mooroolbark Community Centre (MCC) or Montrose Town Centre (MTC). Bookings can be made by phoning 1300 368 333 or online: www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach	
June - August	Red Earth Gallery exhibitions: Christina Bolli June 2-28 (opening June 4), "Textiles" by Kaz & Kristin June 30-July 26 (opening July 2), Karly Whalley July 28-August 23 (opening July 30). Free, open during business hours, MCC.
June - August	Montrose Movie Club: Enjoy hand-picked cinema hits from the '30s to '70s including <i>Adam's Rib</i> and <i>The Misfits</i> . \$10 subscription, third Monday every month, 7 pm MTC.
29 June - 10 July	School Holidays: Free and low-cost activities including kids' shows, art workshops and movies. MCC and MTC.
3 July	School Holiday Show Oz Opera's Hansel and Gretel: Colourful costumes and Humperdinck's music bring this classic Grimm fairy tale to life. \$8, \$5 online / library members. 11am and 2pm, MCC.
8 July	School Holiday FREE Family Movie: Tickets available from 17 June. 7:30 pm, Mooroolbark.
12 July	School Holiday Show Paddington Bear's First Concert: Whitehorse Orchestra performs a classical concert for kids. \$8, \$5 online / library members. 1 pm and 3 pm, Mooroolbark.
17 July	Glitch Dance Party: All-ages dance party with DJs and big screen games. Hosted by FReeZA and Yarra Ranges Council Youth Services. Fully supervised, drug/smoke/alcohol free event. \$5, 7-10 pm, MCC. Contact Youth Services on 9294 6716.
21 August	FReeZA Battle of the Bands. 6:30 to 10:30 pm, Mooroolbark. Contact Youth Services on 9294 6716.

Our Community Events Calendar offers a free service to local clubs and organisations. To include entries for your group's community events in future issues please contact Doug Lewis on 9761 1121 or email lewisdm@bigpond.net.au

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

LIVINGTODAY in Mooroolbark

Production

LIVINGTODAY in Mooroolbark is produced by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship, assisted by local volunteers



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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)

PDFs of this issue and all past issues of *Living Today* can be accessed at: <http://mcf.gci.org.au/current/livingtoday.html>
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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

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.