

Bayside U3A

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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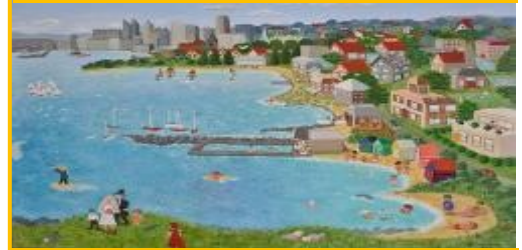
Please note the U3A Office is not open during lockdown.

2021 TERM DATES

Term 4 4th October—17th December

NEWSLETTER

October 2021



Beaumaris Office:

Monday to Friday 9:30am - 2:00pm

Brighton Office

Monday to Friday 9:30am - 12noon

MELBOURNE LOCKDOWN CONTINUES...

All face-to-face classes remain cancelled in line with the extended lockdown.

Classes currently conducted by Zoom will continue for this duration unless otherwise informed.

We will update you whenever the rules change.

Contact with Bayside U3A members and families who are in need is available. Details on page 2.

PLEASE STAY SAFE!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Tony Aplin

Dear Members

It is the case that I've been moving to a 'blog' type article where I express my opinion and raise issues that I feel strongly about, but as before, this is entirely my opinion that I'm inflicting on you.



"To surround anything, however monstrous or ridiculous, with an air of mystery, is to invest it with a secret charm and power of attraction which to the crowd is irresistible." This is yet another quote from Dickens, this time *Barnaby Rudge* and relates to a little remembered, but significant 'rebellion' in London in 1780: the Gordon Riots. After some 200 years of mostly Catholic repression and oppression, with some notable exceptions, the Parliament had repealed some of the anti-Catholic laws via the Papists Act 1778. Many hadn't been enforced for very many years including for example, restoring the right of Catholics to inherit and purchase land.

The above event in some perverse, reverse, imprecise, even vague way* led me to think about the current situation with the 'anti-vaxers' and 'freedom fighters' (the AVFF for short). In *Barnaby Rudge*, the rioters were fed outrageous misinformation, incited to riot and included a huge amount of destruction to Catholic houses and churches and anti-Catholic murders. After a very muddled and slow response from the authorities, the military were called upon, about 300 of the rioters were killed and many of the arrested were hung afterwards. I hope this analogy doesn't offend anyone too much. I'm certainly not really suggesting that the AVFF be killed or hung but they are violent and are lucky they are just arrested.

The Gordon Riots, I guess, show what can result from years of prejudice and misinformation, mostly emanating from 'the higher echelons of society'. I can't imagine that most, if not all the AVFF have not had a vaccination in their life. Their 'stupidity' seems to be more related to the recent 'culture' in the US, the Trump years to be specific, where misinformation, lies and outright stupidity, has most unfortunately come to the fore but hopefully not the norm.

Continued overleaf...

Continued from the President, Tony Aplin

As in London in 1780, the vast majority of the Melbourne population are aghast by the beliefs and actions of the AVFF and perhaps wish that the same result as 1780 London could be inflicted on them! I mean this is hard enough without 'the mobs' of AVFFs acting in total contradiction of our path out of this.

We all know, I think, that the worst threat is overwhelming our health services. This is frustrating enough without some (AVFFs) creating anarchy and an atmosphere of fear and hate.

We're inching closer along the way back I'm sure, so please stay sane, happy and safe.

Best regards, Tony Aplin

PS: No further reports of vandalism at Beaumaris Senior Centre since the CCTV was installed.

** Shows you how hard it is becoming for me to find a theme for these articles.*

Bayside U3A Happy Hour

***This event depends on Health advice.
Notification will be circulated when it resumes.***

5—6pm last Friday of the month

26th November



No need to book/reply. Just turn up!

Drinks: Special \$6 sparkling or house wine, discount beer and some spirits.

Please wear your U3A name badge and bring along your RSL membership card if you have one! Dinner available for those wishing to stay on.

Hampton RSL, 25 Holyrood Street Hampton

LET'S DO DINNER

Convenor: Karen Hall 0402 891 183

Unfortunately, many of our planned dinners could not proceed. Hopefully we can meet together in November.

Proposed last dinner for the year

Saturday 20th November: Cheltenham RSL – final for the year

Further details will be emailed to those enrolled in Course code: 21002.



Do you know a Bayside U3A member in need?

Contact with Bayside U3A members and families who are in need is available.

If you hear of someone in need of a caring card or phone call, or is isolated during lockdown times, please contact me directly or via U3A.

Karen Hall sidonyhall@gmail.com 0402 891 183 or via baysideu3a@gmail.com

COURSE NEWS**Convenor: Sue Steele**

2022's course planning is looking really, really good. We have some new courses to tempt you and most of your old favourites are returning. Planning is well underway.

Thanks to everyone who has already volunteered their time and expertise for next year. We will have a great range of courses and activities either face-to-face or in some cases, online.

Key membership and enrolment dates**20th October**

2022 Course Guide available online - some new courses may be added after this date

1st November

Online membership renewal opens (this doesn't include course enrolment)

8th November

2022 enrolment period commences online, email or Australia Post

30th November

Enrolments received by this date are included in the ballots held for over-subscribed classes, later enrolments are not.

13th to 18th December

2022 enrolment information sent to members.

A bonus for new members

From 1st October, new membership extends until the end of 2022. This means anyone who joins in term 4 can enrol in 2021 classes now and then enrol in 2022 classes from 8th November, for a single year subscription.

LET'S PLAY WITH 3D PRINTERS**Tutor: Dr Juan Soler**

3D Printers are everywhere today. You can buy one for as little as \$199. But to many people they are also a bit of a mystery. What kinds are there? What are they for? What can they do? Do you need a degree to drive one?

Well, we are going to unpack all these questions and explore a whole bunch of ways to use them: from making Xmas decorations and birthday cards, to fixing the flywire door or making vases. Join us on ZOOM as we discover the fun and entertainment that exists within the world of 3D printing.



Wednesday 3rd November 10am - 12pm

Enrol online or email us at baysideu3a@gmail.com Course: 21155.

OPENDAY

BAYSIDE U3A OPEN DAY**Online****Wednesday 20th October 1pm - 4pm**

We've moved our Open Day online via Zoom because of the COVID Roadmap.

Experience a taste of the wide range of activities that Bayside U3A has to offer. Meet the tutors and enjoy the company of existing members while participating in a Tai Chi class, joining a book discussion, learning about modern history or music through the ages.

Zoom in any time during the session and stay for as long as you wish.

Register online or email us at baysideu3a@gmail.com and we'll send you the Zoom link.

CLASSICAL MUSIC Trombone and French Horn**Tutor: David Peake**

Hi Everybody,

Face-to-face classes are still not permitted so I am continuing with my virtual classes on the instruments of the orchestra. There are few works that feature the Trombone but I believe that I have found an enjoyable collection. I have featured the French Horn previously but I have found different works to present to you.

I hope you enjoy my selection. Please let me know your preferences and suggestions for future classes - they are always very useful.

TROMBONE

Here is another of the Philharmonia Orchestra's background to the instrument - as always, well done.

<https://youtu.be/EndhDQWIUgg>



Ferdinand David (1810-73) was a German violinist and composer. He was close friend of Mendelssohn and his influence is shown in this work. The soloist and the Israel Philharmonic give a fine rendition.

https://youtu.be/EYiH_HaaGNM

Here is a lesser known work of Rimsky Korsakov's (1844-1908). It is given a forthright performance by the soloist and the Macau Wind Symphony Orchestra.

<https://youtu.be/eMkuxhqByHY>

From Tchaikovsky's opera Eugene Onegin, this is a suite arranged for the trombone. The soloist and the Marinsky Theatre Orchestra perform this work very well. https://youtu.be/_dFilj8iT84

FRENCH HORN

The Philharmonia Orchestra's usual absorbing take on the instrument. <https://youtu.be/cK0UFgnrlqY>

GP Telemann (1681-1767) composed a huge amount of music during his long life including a number of works for the Horn. This one is performed very capably by the soloist and the Miami Summer Festival Orchestra in 2015.

<https://youtu.be/DBKQ8taNVuY>

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was almost as prolific as Telemann. This piece is attributed to him but may well be by his brother, Michael. Either way it is very enjoyably played by the soloist and the Israel Camerata. https://youtu.be/T1-OkEXkp_k

Reinhold Glière (1875-1956) was a Russian composer of German origin. Among his very varied body of works, is this Horn concerto which is nicely performed by the soloist.

https://youtu.be/3KRS_yH4sOs

Richard Strauss (1864-1949) composed two Horn Concertos. This is No. 2, composed in 1942 and is performed by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. No. 1 was in my first Horn collection (4th July).

https://youtu.be/HNXx_2ZV28g

**MEALS on WHEELS**

On July 1, 1953, Australia's first Meals on Wheels service set off to a rousing cheer. The service delivered hot dishes to South Melbourne's sick and elderly citizens who wished to remain at home but were unable to purchase or prepare their own meals.



Launched by the South Melbourne Home Help Auxillary, the meals were initially delivered by Mrs E. Watts on a tricycle donated by the South Melbourne community chest. In 1954, the Red Cross provided the service with a car and volunteers to help it expand across Melbourne.

Throughout the 1950s, Meals on Wheels programs began operating in other Australian cities and regional areas, and today, Meals on Wheels services more than 75,000 people with over 10 million meals annually.

In this photograph from the archives, Rebecca Kennedy, 85, gets a meal from the mobile hot box of Mrs Watts in South Melbourne.

(from The Age Australia)



In this edition of the Bayside U3A newsletter, we feature another outstanding member of our volunteer team.

MEET KAREN HALL – BAYSIDE U3A VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Welfare Officer, Committee Member, 'Let's do Dinner' Convenor and Office Volunteer at the Old Brighton Courthouse.

As a later-in-life baby and a surprise for her 45 year old, second-time married mother, Karen was introduced to music at an early age by her father who emigrated from Brazil, without family, at 13 years of age.

Elocution eisteddfods, piano accordion, banjo club and a couple of TV appearances on The Happy Hammond Show and Swallows Juniors dominated her early years. Later in her teens, before the boys were drafted to the Vietnam War, Karen was lead singer in the rock band 'Five Eights'.

Like many others of her vintage, Karen 'fell' into a career. Her best intentions to be a school teacher, a very common option for girls in those years, were dashed by her conservative mother's push to join the Public Service, considered a very safe employment option post-war.



On the day of President Kennedy's assassination, Karen naively lined up for an aptitude test, along with 500 other hopefuls, having no real idea why she was there. Four hours later and exams over, Karen's final results indicated that she might have the ability to adapt to the innovative new computer world that was destined to become our normal.

So Karen entered the Public Service: Bureau of Statistics, Department of Transport and then, the Melbourne Stock Exchange (now ASX) who were looking for 'people with some computing experience'. Many years later in the heady 80's, with the installation of the first commercial Digital Equipment computers, Karen had the opportunity to move into the exciting global world of computers, based in Merrimack, New Hampshire USA, for sales training.

BHP Petroleum, BHP Information Technology, IBM and Newcrest Mining led to further career highlights as she moved through IT support, Training Management, Account Management, Global Admin and finally to HR. IT was an ideal career for a woman in the 60's (not her 60's) when equal opportunities began to flourish.

Karen's first marriage was a relatively brief adventure living in Perth and Cairns, long before marlin fishing made its mark. Her second, also relatively short marriage, produced one very cherished daughter and several beloved step-children.

Bayside is her favourite place to be, having lived on the same corner for 43 years! Beach walks are her absolute preferred activity and without doubt, have saved her sanity since the first lockdown. So too has her precious cat Ollie.

Walking is Karen's passion. As a 3 year old, she once escaped to follow a steam-roller headed to Werribee! She does like to keep very busy. From energetic Rock'n'Roll dancing and Zumba to the more relaxed Yoga and Pilates.

Now, thanks to U3A, she has added bridge, tai chi, balance and bones and flexibility classes to her repertoire. When retirement approached two years ago, she trained as a volunteer Court Networker with the Moorabbin Law Courts.

U3A has also saved her sanity, as have the friends she has made. Karen feels it is a privilege to serve on the Committee.

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS

Tutor: Susan McCarthy

Zoom has kept our conversations alive! We meet each week and managed to converse for around 1.5 hours. Our conversations are quite diverse from sharing information about our individual current handcraft projects and skill information, to books and TV ideas to stave off the boredom. The day of the earthquake, conversation was definitely shaken not stirred! The real benefit of these weekly sessions is to keep in touch with the group and to have a sense of community. Yes, Zoom is not for everyone but it is such a useful tool to maintain our connection with each other.



Susan McCarthy: A Bespoke Jumper

Recycled wool has been used to knit this jumper. The wool had previously been used for a hand knitted jacket but for various reasons had sat in the cupboard. I decided to repurpose the wool. This involved unraveling the jacket, putting the wool into hanks, washing the hanks to relax the yarn curls, then, when dry, winding them back into balls. At the end of this process, I had yarn that was as good as new!

The jumper was knitted using 3 or 4 patterns as a guide just to give me more of a challenge. I am extremely pleased with the end result —especially pleased with the collar!

Lynette Taylor: Multi coloured cushion, throw and cardigan

Using wool ends from her stash, Lynette made these beautiful multi coloured items. She really enjoyed choosing the colours for the strips but weaving the end in was the worst part in knitting these items. The end results are worth all her efforts.



Kay Davis: Pieced fabric bag

Kay loves making bags and has made many over the years. In lockdown she has mastered the skill of attaching lining to her bags. This is her first effort of piecing fabric and of course has made it into a bag with lining for her sister. She was helped along the way with support and ideas from members of the group. Making the bag she had learnt a new skill and has gained much pleasure from the process. Great work Kay!

Sandra Groves: Hand appliquéd and machine quilt; Koala quilt using pixilation technique



Sandra has completed several quilts over the past year. These two quilts show her expertise in the processes of quilt making.

The hand appliquéd and machine quilt was started in first lockdown and finished in the fifth lockdown.

The Koala quilt was made for her niece's baby in New Zealand. She used pixilation technique to create the image for the quilt.

The baby and quilt arrived on the same day!



A beautiful example of Sandra's skill.



Sue Maxwell: 3inch star quilt

This Karen Styles star quilt has been in the making for about 18 months. It started out as a 365 3inch star quilt.

After 65 stars, I decided they were too fiddly and boring so I adapted the pattern with a suitable panel and other fabrics to make the borders. I found the final border fabric on Instagram from my favourite patchwork shop in Canterbury, Victoria. It took 4 weeks for the fabric to arrive having travelled via Sydney 3 times!

Fantastic work Sue and a gorgeous quilt!

THURSDAY INTERMEDIATE FRENCH

(This article was composed by all of the U3A Intermediate French group)

The U3A Intermediate French group has been learning and having enormous fun with our text book 'M. Spitzweg'.

He is a complex character who shares his lifestyle choices with the reader, from political and religious to oenological and gastronomic, from artistic and philosophical to functional and pragmatic, from issues in the local community to those in the broader world.

The passages have inspired our tutor to show us how to explore the language with passion, overcoming the challenges of Zoom classes.

The fun really begins when all members of the class relate, in French of course, similar or sometimes very different, experiences to M. Spitzweg's.

We've looked forwards and backwards, discovered strange expressions such as 'des oursins dans la poche' (sea urchins in your pocket) that led us to contemplation of tightwads we've known, talked about happy events and also things that annoy us.

We've talked about hoarding and also about letting things go, like our standards during confinement.

Not only have we expanded our vocabulary, but the interesting lives led by our classmates have been revealed.

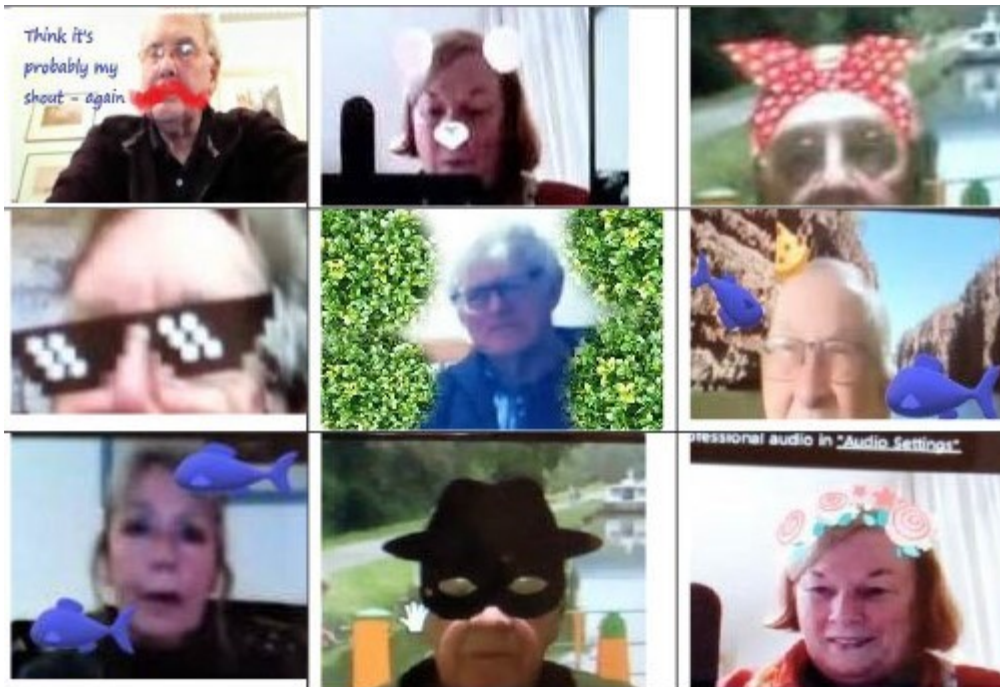
Philippe Delerm
Monsieur Spitzweg
Il avait plus tout le dimanche
Monsieur Spitzweg s'échappe
Quelque chose en lui de Bartsby



Tutor : Jane Olsen

WINE APPRECIATION

Convenor: Sally Mort



As you can see, we had a fun night at our Wine Appreciation Zoom class last month - thanks to Michael for showing us how to add some little extras to our photos!!

Just doing different things during your normal Zoom class can really liven them up!

BAYSIDE U3A WRITERS GROUP**Tutor: Cheryl Threadgold****SURPRISE by Vivienne Player**

"Miss Twye was soaping her breasts in the bath,
When she heard a meaning laugh,
And to her surprise she discovered
A wicked man in the bathroom cupboard."

I came across this gem in a 'Book of Comic and Curious Verse'. Curious indeed! Its impact lies in the word 'surprise'. Not 'alarm', 'shock' or 'horror'; just, ambiguously, 'surprise'.

I thought of these lines when I met up with an ex-neighbour of mine on an interstate train trip. During the several hours we spent together, she confided the following story.

Miss Rigby (to protect her privacy, I have changed her name) is a rather plain woman, now in her mid-fifties. Some years ago she had a brief affair with a young man she met online. "He was *really* good-looking," she told me, "Irish, I think, with a lovely voice, and..." (she looked a bit embarrassed) "these golden curls." I looked at Miss Rigby's thin untidy hair, the grey undisguised by any attempt at colour. I noted again the nose too large for her face, the disappointed eyes. "How old?" I asked, not altogether tactfully. "Oh, he would have been in his thirties... twenties maybe." She was clearly aware of the incongruity of the liaison.

They'd met up for coffee, then a couple of meals. "We went Dutch, of course. I didn't want to be, um, obliged." Nonetheless, she subsequently asked him home. He stayed the night and then, after a week or two, "sort-of moved in". There were happy days – and nights – before one day she came home from work (she was, rather unbelievably, a hairdresser) to find him gone, along with some heirloom jewellery, her only valuable possessions. Shame at her own manifest gullibility prevented her from going to the police.

It was about a year later, on a mid-winter night, that she answered what sounded like an urgent knock at her door. "Can you imagine? It was the last thing I could have expected!" It was, in fact, no other than her erstwhile lover, wet and cold, his collar turned up against the bitter weather, his 'golden curls' stuck damply to his head. She let him in, invited him to 'take a nice warm shower – the poor fellow was drenched to the skin'. He dried himself in front of her small gas heater and she was totally disarmed by his appealing blue eyes and 'long eyelashes like a girl's'.

Needless to say, they spent a presumably enjoyable night together. "You didn't accuse him of robbing you? Of deceiving you and betraying you like that? It was unforgiveable!" I said. "No, I was going to have it out with him in the morning, but I went back to sleep and by the time I woke, he was gone again."

So was the purse from her bedside drawer. "There wasn't much in it," she said, resigned. "I wasn't really surprised."

MARK by John Maddick

It was his turn to step onto the edge of the rock and jump into the water below. Mark didn't do stuff like this usually. But his younger brother and his mates were watching.

The fall made his tummy lurch more than he was ready for. Then he opened his eyes in the brown water, looking for the surface. His eyes stung.

When he climbed back up on the bank, they were peeling off the rock, one by one, bombing, belly-flopping, bum-whacking, legs scissoring.

"You coming up again?" one of the twins asked him, stopping right in front of him. He wasn't going to.

"Yeah, sure," he said.

Later they dried off in the autumn sun. It was better than staying home all weekend. Mark's brother and one of the twins were flat-backed up on the big boulder, soaking up the warmth, the other twin lounging next to them, up on one elbow, part of the conversation. Mark couldn't hear what they were saying. How come his brother was always the first to make new friends? They'd been here six months and Mark still hadn't found a friend you could visit.

Raymond walked into the middle of them.

"Wanna help us nick home brew from my uncle's?" Mark didn't respond, it being possible the question wasn't directed to him specifically. Raymond turned towards Mark's brother and the twins. "It's in this shed. We go in after dark. His crazy mutt knows me. I just need someone to climb over the back fence."

The three boys nodded. Raymond turned back to Mark.

"What about it?"

"Nah. Got homework to do." It was all right for them. They were a couple of years behind him at school, even though Raymond was bigger.

"Ya woos."

They weren't talking to him, sitting round in the sun. After a while he rode home.

Next morning, his mother, squint-frowning like she did when she had a hangover – or was it from the cigarette hanging from her mouth – said "Did David come home last night?"

"I think he stayed over at the twins."

He watched her rest the cigarette in the ash-tray and pass him a flat paper bag from off the bench next to it. She was still frowning.

"A surprise."

Inside was a fresh drawing pad.

"Your dad sent it over. So you can practice for your Art."

Out in the bungalow, he set the pad on his grandmother's sewing table that he used for a desk. He opened out a creamy-white page. With his first light pencil strokes he found the shape of the boy bombing. He worked around the outline, catching the boy crouched forward over the knee he had pulled up to his chest, other leg hanging. He added hair streaming up from the boy's brow, like it did the first time one of the twins bombed. He started shading. He was humming.

"You're humming again," Bob would say, the boy who worked next to him in Art class. He liked Bob sitting next to him. He knew Bob wished he found art as easy.

SURPRISE by Margaret Boyes-Pringle

17th August 2021

This dull, overcast morning, the woman sat at her desk in the sunroom and looked out upon her garden; the horizon dominated and foreshortened by the looming juggernaut of the school block's new, geometric roof. It was almost as if the Titanic had risen from the seabed and was present in its grim, greyness; its metal flesh cutting the sky, dripping rain and rules and regularity but not seaweed. Or souls.

The chain link fence stood before it, reminiscent of the sight she had seen in Cape Town when migrating here in 1972 on the ship *Ellinis*. It had been sunny in the port as they had docked; you know, that lovely mellow warm golden sun of late afternoon, early evening? Buses had been laid on to take them on a short tour of the city and she'd been excited to see this new world beneath the majestic bulk of Table Mountain as it stood fired in gold and burning under the impossibly blue sky. But to her surprise and dismay it hadn't been a new world. It had been a very old one where entrenched discrimination against the many is preached and perpetuated by the entitled few ... so all she really remembers is the sign on the bench on the side of the road that said, 'Whites Only' and the sight of the Whites Only swimming pool, cordoned off by that same chain link fence, where children watched other children swimming with their friends and their families and frolicking in the water, while they stood on the outside, their black fingers curled through the black wire cells, their black eyes, already caged, full of longing, grief, confusion. Outrage? She had felt outrage. She had felt outrage this morning, reading the papers, watching the news, seeing and hearing and sharing the visceral cries of Afghani women of all ages, protesting their rape, death and torture at the hands of the self righteous gaze and monstrous grip of the Taliban.

Why does the world turn, she wondered, when we insist on standing still?

Staying within the hemisphere but pulled back now to this present, her eyes registered the generations of tears falling on the window panes. As rain they deepened the green of the lawn, picking out the clover, glistening on the golden fruit of the old lemon tree that stood in the middle distance of the garden. That gorgeous, generous Meyer lemon had for years given so much fruit that there was enough to share with neighbours, family, friends, Pilates people, U3A people, people at the hairdressers. The advice from better cooks was always to make lemon curd, lemon meringue pies, preserved lemon but mainly the gold formed wedges spurted over fish, or discs floated in carafes of water with sprigs of mint to cleanse the palate, clear the mind and boost the body's vitamin store. Besides, it was nice to share, and for her the lemon tree remained an exotic icon and symbol of their new life as painted by the brochures sent out with confidence and promise by Australia House, the Strand, London. The promise had been kept and what a life it had been.

HAROLD AND MARION**by Geoffrey Dobbs**

Life had become dull, thought Harold. Maybe this was what happened when you reached your late sixties and retired. He thought now that he shouldn't have sold the business. Even his relationship with Marion had become routine. Lunch twice a week and the weekends spent together. Neither of them had wanted more than that. Marion prized her career and her independence. She was in her forties and had never married. Harold had married and divorced twice. He had a daughter, who wanted nothing to do with him. He'd had a son too, briefly. The pain of that loss had faded and he thought of the boy only occasionally. He couldn't even remember his birthday.

Marion had texted him: could they have lunch tomorrow instead of their usual day? It was Harold's golf day but reluctantly, he agreed. They met at their favourite Italian restaurant. Harold ordered wine for them both, as usual, but Marion left her glass untouched. She seemed distracted, thought Harold. She looked tired and older. He wondered if her accounting practice was becoming too stressful. Marion cleared her throat and leaned across the table towards him:

"Harold, we need to talk." Harold put down his glass and gave her a surprised look.

"Harold, I'm pregnant."

"You can't be ... I mean it's not possible. You must be mistaken."

Marion sighed. "Harold, I'm forty-six years old. I think I can tell if I'm pregnant. Anyway, I've had the test and it's confirmed."

"But ... but," stuttered Harold. "How could I possibly have fathered a child at my age?"

"Well, obviously you did," Marion replied. "You must have had a live round in the chamber," she added, with a half-smile.

A shadow of doubt crossed Harold's mind.

"You haven't, I mean, you haven't been with anyone else, have you?" He immediately regretted the question.

Marion glared at him. "Of course I haven't, how could you even think that?" She began to cry.

Harold reached across the table and took her hand. "I'm sorry—that was silly of me. Look, we'll sort it out." A strange current of excitement was running through him.

"We'll sort it out? What do you mean? I'll have to sort it out. I've made a booking for next week." Seeing the bewilderment on Harold's face she added: "For God's sake, I'm going to have an abortion. You don't expect me to have the baby, do you?"

"No, no, of course, I understand," murmured Harold, looking away, suddenly stabbed by a feeling that felt almost like grief.

They ate their meal half-heartedly, in silence and parted with a perfunctory kiss.

That night, Harold dreamt of his long-lost son. They were together on a wide, sunlit beach. Tom held up a brightly coloured beach ball and threw it. Harold caught the ball and clasped its smooth warmth to his chest. But the ball slipped from his arms and fell motionless at his feet. Abruptly, Harold awoke, the warmth of the beach ball fading from his body, his face wet with tears.

SURPRISE **by Geoff Oscar**

One house in the street was not in keeping with the others. The residents were all hard-working, middle-class people who took pride in maintaining neat homes and well-tended gardens, with cars washed weekly to conversations over fences. A street of young families, with the happy sounds of children playing together. Chalked hopscotch courts embellished driveways, even the road, with weekend end-to-end football on the street interrupted only by occasional passing cars.

But not this one house, with predominantly untended garden and overgrown weeds. Several pickets were missing from the front fence, with peeling paintwork. Any sign of life was occasionally evidenced when an unkempt man of indeterminate age limped onto the front porch to sit in an old cushioned armchair.

Jim Beveridge was about six when he asked his mother, "Mum, who is that old man at number 26?" His mother replied, "That's Mr Swinton, poor man. Don't you worry about him and don't go in to talk to him."

By the age of eight, Jim made it a custom to say "Hello Mr Swinton" as he walked past the man sitting in the armchair. "Hello Jim, how's it going?" would be the invariable response.

One day Jim saw Mr Swinton labouring to put his rubbish bin on the nature strip. "Let me do that for you," he said, easing the bin from only half-protesting hands. By early teens, Jim also enjoyed roughly maintaining the old man's garden. By now his parents accepted there was no harm in the innocent relationship he had struck up with their odd-man-out neighbour.

Over the years, the relationship grew. Jim learned of the road accident that had killed Mr Swinton's wife and two young children, his own injuries leaving him unable to work again as a solicitor. He knew his now friend had enough money to live on, but not enough to do more. He knew what a great and happy life Robert, as he called him now, had enjoyed until that tragic day, and the lonely life he had lived since. He shared his own latest achievements through school and then university. He sometimes sought advice on a current issue of concern in preference to that of his parents. The two shared an easy understanding and could happily converse on any subject.

After graduation and moving to a shared apartment with two mates to be nearer his work as a trainee stockbroker, Jim had an extra component in his life. He had met Barbara and was desperately in love. The two were planning a future together, undaunted by financial obstacles facing the young.

On visits home, now accompanied by Barbara, Jim always made a point of spending a short time with Robert. He observed with concern his deteriorating health and reliance on Council-provided home help and care, and was not surprised when hearing that old Mr Swinton had passed away. He was greatly saddened to learn of the passing of one who had influenced his life for the better. There was no funeral to attend.

It was some two years later, now happily married to Barbara, living in a small but adequate flat and saving hard for their first home deposit, that Jim received a letter from Standish, Swinton and Stevenson, Solicitors, in Armadale. Would he please make an appointment at his convenience?

Came the appointed day and after brief introductions, the solicitor said, "Jim, Robert Swinton was once a respected partner here at Standish, Swinton and Stevenson. We were pleased to handle the winding-up of his estate and are now attending to his last wishes, expressed in his will." He smiled as he gazed at Barbara and Jim and said, "In his will, Robert has stated: 'In recognition and appreciation of his friendship, assistance and care over many years, being no less than I might have expected from a son, I hereby bequeath the residue of my estate in its entirety to Jim Beveridge. I wish him every happiness in his life.'"

Then, standing to shake hands, he said, "Jim, here is a bank cheque for five hundred thousand dollars from Robert. Enjoy it."

THE CORPORAL'S SURPRISE

by Helen Graham

Corporal L was feeling a bit anxious. Tonight, after many months, he was to be outed. Described as a *quite proper 38 year old, professional Australian soldier with a soft side; an almost British military accent*, he had been content to remain in the background as befitted someone recently seconded to Army Intelligence. Even the information that he had been born in Canton and worryingly, where he lived now, was about to be revealed.

Who was responsible for this invasion of his privacy?

Blame must be attributed to Gary, who had asked someone called Cheryl, who in turn organised a group of people to be involved. Corporal L was a bit embarrassed because he didn't want to draw attention to the fact, that he, the son of a high ranking diplomat, had only made it to being a corporal.

But here he was, on a Monday night, on this online thing called Z. Give him face-to-face or radio communication any day, but COVID isolation had proved far more effective, than any military offensive, in shutting down the world.

They were all there when he logged on. Gary, Cheryl, Colleen, Helen, Jan, John, Joy, Juliet and Norah. What a crew. Cheryl introduced them as being experienced. Gary seemed pleased, so Corporal L relaxed just a little. Not completely, because being in the Army had taught him never to let his guard down altogether.

Corporal L was quite unprepared for what happened next. Cheryl invited one of the panel members to speak. She immediately commented that he should have a higher rank as befitting his status as a diplomat's son. There was much discussion as his character was revealed, until by the end of the meeting he had been promoted from a lowly corporal to a lieutenant to a captain.

What a surprise. He knew his father would be pleased.

That's what can happen when Cheryl Threadgold organises her team of playwrights to critique a new work ...

To all members of U3A Bayside from Joan Gibbs.

This article was sent to me by a friend who knows I am interested in any words of knowledge written by a Native American. I thought it may be meaningful to U3A members. The following words need to reach as many people as possible, to remind them of the need in these troubling times, to listen to the following words of wisdom.

'The single biggest thing I learnt from an indigenous elder of Cherokee descent, Stan Rushworth, was the difference between a Western settler's mindset of 'I have rights' and an Indigenous mindset of 'I have obligations'. Instead of thinking that I am born with rights, I choose to think that I am born with obligations to serve past, present and future generations and, the planet herself.'

MAKING THE BEST OF IT PRESERVING YOUR WNE

SATURDAY NIGHT'S ALRIGHT

Even Saturday night is a thing again, as families and friends, mask-free, gather around their devices for a laugh and a convivial glass of wine. You wouldn't be dead for quids! And there's more good news: there was a time when Saturday night drinks with the family could seriously deplete the cellar. Now, the hilarity's all over by 9 o'clock, and you've still got half a bottle of your favourite juice left for another occasion. Which, dear reader, brings us – finally – to the point.

SOMETHING IN THE AIR

Wine and air enjoy a volatile relationship. A little exposure to oxygen can work wonders – opening up fruit flavours and softening tannins – but too much air will oxidise your wine, robbing it of its gorgeous aromas and delicate fruit flavours.

So, like the model citizen that you are, you've put the lid back on the bottle. But what's that sitting between your wine and its cap? Arrgghhh... AIR!!! If you're planning to consume the rest of the bottle within, say, the next 24 hours, you should be fine. You might notice a slight dulling of flavour, but nothing too serious. But if your next tittle won't be for a few days yet (oh you good thing!), your wine is going to need a little help.

SELF PRESERVATION

There are two methods for preserving an already-opened bottle of wine. One takes the air out, creating a vacuum; the other essentially floods your wine with an inert gas (argon), sealing it off from pesky oxygen molecules. Both of these will grant your juice anything from a couple of days to a week or more of freshness and vibrancy.

The market starts at just a handful of dollars for a basic wine pump. WineDown would prefer to remain brand-agnostic, but the Vacuvin pump and stoppers purchased 30 years ago are still going strong. (They cost around \$20 then, and they're not much dearer than that today.)

Argon gas preservers are pricier, but if you're a gadget fancier, or looking for a you-beaut gift for someone spesh, they could be just the ticket. Drop the words wine preserver into your search engine, and Bob's your uncle.

TOP OF THE WOZZ

If you've won Powerball recently (we're looking at you Melbourne), you might want to drop a lazy grand on something truly extraordinary. A system that allows you to pour a glass of wine without actually opening the bottle! It's true. A superfine Teflon-coated needle allows you to pierce the cork and pour wine out. When the needle is withdrawn, argon replaces oxygen in the bottle, and the cork simply expands back to its normal shape. You can return your bottle to the rack and pour yourself another glass in a year or so. Or when lockdown finishes.

Whichever comes first.

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