

MALA MESSENGER

Newsletter of the Mature Adults Learning Association Inc. Rockingham Branch

JULY 2020

FROM THE CHAIR

Optimism abounds. Cross all available fingers and toes that when Phase 4 swings into operation on the 27th June all goes well. Should that be the case Phase 5 would follow on the 18th July. Phase 5 should see us here at MALA being able to get going again for Term 3 and 4.

The committee is beginning to work to achieve that end. I know there is still some way to go, and as Victoria has shown things do not always go smoothly, but it is nice to have some sort of hope at last.

It is with sadness that I must report the passing of a dear and wonderful lady Patricia Barker. Our sincerest sympathy to Lex.

In contrast it is with pleasure that I congratulate James Mumme on receiving an OAM for his work in environmental conservation and contribution to the community.

I trust that a lot of you have headed for your pencils, pens and keyboard to take part in the writing challenge. Everyone has a trove of stories to tell and none of them are the same, but all of them interesting. We'd love you to get writing and share just a few with us. Entries to Rhuwina by July 10.

We have adjusted to the new reality of wait and see, taking care everywhere and limiting our activities, so the prospect of a freer life is enticing. Hopefully in the next edition of the Messenger we'll be able to give you some definitive information about resuming classes.

Bronwen Usher – Chair



VALE

PATRICIA BARKER

It is with very great sadness that we report the death of Patricia Barker. Pat was a gracious lady who had led a remarkable life. With husband Lex they were stalwarts of MALA, supporting us since our inception. We will greatly miss the knowledge, compassion and humour she brought to our sessions at MALA.

Our deepest sympathy to Lex on the loss of his wife and soulmate.

COMMITTEE NEWS

As you know our Enrolment Officer Anne Wright had to resign as she was leaving the area. Worse was to come for us, our Membership Officer Yvonne McLeod has also had to resign as she is now on a full time course. We'd like to thank both Anne and Yvonne for their fantastic work and wish them both well into the future.

The GOOD NEWS is that both positions are now filled.

Martin and June Hveissel are now Enrolment Officer and Membership Officer respectively.

We are delighted to welcome them aboard the MALA committee. Our hope now is that they do not have to wait too long to begin their duties. Many thanks to you both for your willingness to join the MALA Admin team.



Use your talents – The bush would be quiet if the birds who sang the best were the only birds to sing.



OTHER NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS JAMES MUMME OAM

James has been the driving force of Friends of Point Peron, an organisation dedicated to the restoration and upkeep of the environment of Cape Peron. This has involved writing many grant applications, planting thousands of trees, organising teams of volunteers, involvement with schools in planting programs and involvement with students from Curtin University.

He is a tireless worker in this field and is an inspiration to the young, fostering in them a sense of value for the environment.

Less known perhaps are his community contributions. He is involved with the Alternatives to Violence Program in WA prisons, a vital contribution to the lessening of domestic violence in our state. He is active in civic matters and he is a regular contributor to council discussions and has stood himself for council.

At his own expense James travelled to Timor Leste, teaching English and helping in the teaching of cultivation methods for local crops. James is an example of what passion can achieve.

Congratulations James, this honour is truly well deserved !



Anger is never without a reason, but seldom a good one.



MALA ANNIVERSARY

Abridged from an article by Association President - Suzanne Higgs

This year is our 40th Anniversary ... OUR celebrations are yet to come.

We take MALA as a given today, but you well may be interested in the history of how we came to be where we are now, This is a *very* brief history of that evolution.

In **1980** a group associated with the WA College of Advanced Education in Mt Lawley, thought it may be a good idea to create an organisation (*School for Seniors*) that would meet their future non-vocational education needs. The program provided was very much like that we run today.

In **1987** things had changed at WACAE in Mt Lawley and a new location was required. The School for Seniors moved to Claremont Campus of WACAE and in **1988** changed their name to *New Directions*. In **1989** WACAE officially became Edith Cowan University. This led to another name change in **1992** as we became *Stepping Out*.

It was in this year that we became an independent body free from any tertiary connection.

In the years between 1980 and 1988 groups undertook overseas Tours to Bali (pottery and landscapes), China (history), the mediterranean (middle eastern history) and China and Mongolia (history and culture).

Finally, in 1993 the name changed to ***Mature Adults Learning Association Incorporated*** and was relocated to Hay Street in West Perth where we remained for six years. The ceiling literally falling in at those premises saw another relocation of the School of Philosophy in Beaufort Street Perth, which would be our home for the next year.

The year **2000**, mainly to the determination of Hazel Butorac the politicians became aware of MALA and its aims for mature adult education in a friendly atmosphere. This saw us invited to the Constitutional Centre (Havelock Street, West Perth) where we remained happily until 2014.

2014 saw us unable to pay the significant increase in charges for the Constitutional Centre and yet another move ensued. Our new venue at the George Burnett Leisure Centre located in Karawara is still the home for Perth MALA today.

Two more branches were established, Peel in 2007 and Rockingham in 2014.

2020 finds MALA going strong in all Branches. 2020 has been an 'unusual' year with the corona virus (COVID19) restrictions closing our venues, interrupting our program and stopping our ability to present classes. But rest assured we are no less dedicated to the provision, promotion and valuing of mature aged non-formal, lifelong learning opportunities than we ever were.

For those of you interested in reading the entire article please see the website and go to Perth link.



BOOKSHELF

This month our recommended reads are :

CLUETOPIA - The story of 100 years of the crossword by DAVID ASTLE

The book opens with the sentence - "Warning this book is a folly". Folly it may be, but for those of us who love the challenge of crosswords or even the occasional dabble, this is a fun and very informative book.

The crossword officially began in 1913/14 and is tracked here for a century. Significant historical events are noted and the development of our expanding language catalogued. It is easy to follow the development of our increasing wealth, political changes and political correctness. Likewise the space age and development of technology and its impact on us are recorded in a different, quirky and interesting way.

Easy to pick up and put down, the chapters are short and punchy. A great holiday or COVID read. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

Doug Larson liked the book but still reckons that if the English language made any sense at all, a catastrophe would be an apostrophe with fur.



DARK EMU by BRUCE PASCOE

I found this a remarkable book. How did I not know all this before now? This book gives us a description of the pre-european life style of aboriginal people. The life style, the housing, the extensive cultivation of the land, the methods of irrigation, even methods of governance are all recorded by many of the early explorers of our nation.

The records have been at best misunderstood and at worst ignored, amounting to an erasure of history. We all need to read this book and have the true history taught in our schools. Only when we can understand and acknowledge the past as it truly was can we move on into a more truthful and united Australia.

Thanks for those of you who have taken the time to let us know how you have enjoyed the books reviewed. It seems like Radio Girl was a hit.



"Get all the fools on your side and you can be elected to anything." - Frank Dane

(He must have foreseen the Trump election!)



CONTRIBUTIONS

I am always amazed how many members we have with the name Anon. Today another wonderful contribution arrived, this one however has a subtle difference in signature. It does seem a pity that such talent should go unacknowledged, but the choice is yours and we are just thankful that you are sharing your talent with us.

Thanks you to all our Anons past, present and future.

This offering will be very relevant for many of us who find that sleep is not the given that it was in our earlier years. Enjoy this poem and maybe you too will remember past times.

Sometimes When Sleep Evades Me

Sometimes when sleep evades me and the wee small hours tick by
My mind drifts off to long ago, my memory's free to fly
It takes me down my childhood tracks, back to the bush I loved and knew
To the kids I romped through life with, creating mischief, as kids will do

It tracks me though my growing years as life's lesson's I acquired.
I learned that work, sweat, joy and tears were the tools that I required.
Life had a plan I did not know, I had the wide world to explore
The tide of life swept over me and dumped me on many a shore

Through hardships, loss and struggle, though bitter tears and some regrets
Came hope, love, joy and triumph too, I do owe life a lasting debt
How blessed I am to have survived life's turbulent, stormy seas
Landing safe back where I was born midst Aussie's eucalyptus trees

With a family now all grown, their lives so full, diverse and bright
They gave me such a sense of purpose, to watch them growing, a delight.
Now in my fading twilight years when sleep slips from my grasps
I'm so thankful for a memory that lets me roam these dear times passed.

AnoN
Philosophy for our Time



Asking a dumb question is easier than correcting dumb mistakes.



It is thanks to Meera Finnigan this month who has sent us a message for our newsletter. Meera should have been off enjoying the delights of Europe for a year, but instead finds herself COVID captured in WA. So special thanks Meera, your isolation must be particularly difficult to stay philosophical about.

It's with pleasure that I write these few words for the newsletter as it gives me the opportunity to say hello to all of you 'life-long learners' at MALA Rockingham. Many of you have attended philosophy courses that I've conducted over the past few years and I look forward to seeing you again soon. I also welcome any new budding philosophers to a new course in the future.

Many of us, forced into the recent period of isolation have had plenty of advice on what to cook, what to watch, what to read, and even what exercises to do. All of this may have helped us to endure, but we may also have had time to think about the things that are most important to us. To this end, philosophy gives us a framework to think about these things.

From the ancient philosophers of Classical times to current thinkers. Philosophy invites us to think about what it is that makes life worth living and to ask ethical questions such as: 'how should we humans live in this world of ours?' 'What if any obligations do we have towards our fellow human beings, to animals, and to the planet?' Philosophy invites us to think about what is real and ask 'Is everything I see, think, and experience actually how the world truly is?' 'How do I know what truth is?' 'Is science the best way or are there other pathways to truth?'

No doubt, for many of you, as for me, unravelling such philosophical questions and engaging in critical thinking provides one of the most rewarding intellectual pursuits. Enquiring philosophically into the issues of the day, ethical dilemmas, and broad perspectives on big ideas have occupied the human mind for millennia and we are now part of that continuum.

There have been plenty of local and global political issues to think about and much social turbulence to grapple with during this year alone, so there'll be no shortage of issues for us to think about.

So, as we leave our 'cocoons', you may, like me be keen to get back to a learning environment so as to share your love of learning and to engage with others in meaningful discussion.

Aristotle said 'philosophy begins with wonder', and so it is for me, and maybe for you too.

Meera Finnigan M.A. (Phil)

Hopefully Meera we will be able to see you back in person in the not too distant future



QUIZ ANSWERS

Here are the answers to last month's quiz questions :

1. What is the most common colour of toilet paper sold in France?
ANSWER : Pink
2. Henry VIII introduced which tax into England in 1535?
ANSWER : A tax on beards.
3. Which country has the most tornadoes by area?
ANSWER : The UK – not the biggest but the most.
4. What is the correct term for a question mark immediately followed by an exclamation mark?
ANSWER : an INTERROBANG (!?)
5. The average person does what thirteen times a day?
ANSWER : Laugh
6. Coprastastaphobia is the fear of what?
ANSWER : Constipation
7. What were the first ice hockey pucks made out of?
ANSWER : Fozen Cow Dung
8. In which country are there six villages called Silly, 12 called Billy, and two called Pratt?
ANSWER : France
9. True or false: You can sneeze in your sleep
ANSWER : False
10. Who invented the word vomit?
ANSWER : Shakespeare
11. Which European country has 158 verses to its national anthem?
ANSWER : Greece
12. What is the collective noun for a group of unicorns?
ANSWER : a Blessing



*“Those who are too smart to engage in politics
are punished by being governed by those who are dumber.”*

Plato



THAT'S ALL FOLKS

Just a reminder about - **The Writing Challenge**

In no more than 100 words, write the beginning to a story from your life that you'd like to share with others.

As you sit and ponder a beginning what emotions do you want to stir in your readers?

Will it be :

❖ Curiosity ❖ Empathy ❖ Familiarity ❖ High Drama ❖ Excitement ❖

The challenge awaits!

And don't forget – Smile and make people wonder what you are thinking!

And finally, a maxim I should have applied myself a little earlier today -

It is a great mistake to let any mechanical device know that you are in a hurry.

Bronwen Usher



*"This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in
unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in."*

Franklin D Roosevelt

He would be spinning in his grave watching the current President handling the situation in America right now.

