

# MALA MESSENGER

**Newsletter of the Mature Adults Learning Association Inc. Rockingham Branch**

**NOVEMBER 2020**

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## **FROM THE CHAIR**

Many thanks to those of you who have already put in your thoughts for possible future courses. We have heard from about a quarter of you so far. We have a few new ideas which is just what we are looking for. Keep them coming. Email us your ideas or drop off your form at the reception desk on class days.

Welcome to Peter Lester. Peter is our new Volunteer, who is manning the Reception desk for us. Meet Peter at the reception desk as you sign in for our Get Together Lunch on the 25th November, or while you are handing in your Course Subject Survey.

From the buzz around the classes this term I have a feeling that all have been particularly enjoyable and successful. Planning has begun for Term I next year. Our primary hope is that COVID will stay at bay in WA and we can enjoy a full range of courses again in the New Year. More of that later.

The AGM is also on the 25th November. Please consider coming, the more the merrier. Meet the new committee or if you feel so inspired join the team and keep MALA going in Rockingham.

Margaret talked to some of you this week about the Every Age Counts project. This is a campaign against ageism – something we have all no doubt seen subjected to at one time or another. This campaign asks us all to speak up – not put up, with ageism. We have earned respect for our senior status through our years of hard work and overcoming many hurdles in our lives, things that are often not acknowledged in the rush of the modern world. Don't let ageism rob us of the rightful place in society - we have earned it. Speak out when you encounter it.

**Bronwen Usher – Chair**



*A mansion and a humble home can be filled with the same happiness - or the same loneliness.*



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## **MALA – GETTING THE JOB DONE**

### ***A Rough Guide to what is involved -***

#### PRESIDENT/VICE PRESIDENT

- ❖ *Chair Meetings* ❖ *Act As Representative and Spokesperson for MALA* ❖

#### SECRETARY

- ❖ *Book all meeting venues* ❖ *Issue an agenda* ❖ *Minute meetings and distribute to members and other branches* ❖ *Deal with all correspondence* ❖ *Maintain a current financial membership list* ❖ *Keep other branches abreast of our activities* ❖

#### TREASURER

- ❖ *Receive and receipt all monies received* ❖ *Pay all accounts as directed* ❖ *Comply with MALA Association requirements* ❖ *Provide financial reports to committee meetings* ❖ *Prepare financial statement for AGM* ❖ *Hold Association accounting books* ❖ *Maintain petty cash* ❖

#### ASSISTANT TREASURER AND GRANT APPLICATION OFFICER

- ❖ *Act in lieu of Treasurer when necessary* ❖ *Prepare grant applications* ❖

#### ENROLMENT OFFICER/MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

- ❖ *Maintain membership database* ❖ *Create membership forms* ❖ *\*Process all returned forms and keep up to date database for courses* ❖ *Create new enrolment forms for each term with Course Convenor* ❖ *Compile class lists for lecturers* ❖ *Provide name tags for all members* ❖ *Organise name tags for each class* ❖ *Let Logistics Officer know the numbers for each class* ❖

#### COURSE CONVENOR /ASSISTANT

- ❖ *Contact and engage Presenters* ❖ *Send required information and paperwork* ❖ *Write biography and course content notes* ❖ *Book required rooms for each term* ❖ *Send program to Enrolment Officer* ❖ *Find out tech and transport requirements and inform Transport Officer* ❖ *Provide Certificates of Appreciation for each Presenter* ❖ *Develop evaluation forms, distribute and send feedback to Presenters* ❖ *Make name tags for Presenters* ❖

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR/PUBLISHER

- ❖ Provide a once a term/month Newsletter ❖ Distribute to all members via email ❖ Send newsletter to Website Manager in Perth ❖ Write and send out all special notices as required ❖ Maintain email groups ❖

PUBLICITY and EVENTS OFFICER

- ❖ Advertise each course ❖ Use Rockingham Council's advertising forums ❖ Compile/organise flyers and handouts for community events ❖ Compile rosters for community events ❖

PHOTOCOPY OFFICER

- ❖ Liaise with local politicians/businesses for photocopy requirements ❖ Ensure photocopies of membership, enrolment and evaluation forms, newsletters for those without email facilities and presenters' lecture notes – sent to you one week in advance ❖

LOGISTICS OFFICER

- ❖ Ensure that rooms are set up with sufficient accommodation for each class ❖ Ensure that the technical requirements of presenters are met ❖ Arrange a locum should you not be able to attend ❖

TRANSPORT OFFICER

- ❖ Pick up and deliver presenters to and from the station as required ❖ Arrange for presenters equipment to be transported as required ❖

SOCIAL OFFICER

- ❖ Ensure catering for the AGM and other functions as required. ❖ Organise outside functions ❖

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- ❖ To be available to aid and assist in all and any of the above as required ❖



*A \$300 watch and a \$30 watch tell the same time*



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## **BOOKSHELF**

### MY NAME IS WHY by LEMN SISSAY

*This is a book of survival. Survival in the Government Care System in UK. A Fairbridge kid myself I devoured this book. Lemn Sissay tells the truth, not just for himself but for thousands of other children who have been shunted around their needs ignored and rights well and truly trampled on. His writing is clear and a great testament to his resilience and forgiveness. I grieve that children are still in this system today. It awakened many memories for me. Read it you won't forget it quickly.*

Anon

### IF CATS DISAPPEARED FROM THE WORLD by GENKI KAMAMURA

*A small volume, but one I enjoyed greatly. It is gently written, and is basically a reworking of the Faustus story. Faced with your own end, what would you sacrifice for an extra day of life? Would you make a deal with the devil, after all he is asking so little – or is he? Fun and thoughtful. I recommend this book highly.*

Jane

### THE BEEKEEPERS OF ALEPPO BY CHRISTY LEFTER

*This book is the human story behind news images of Syrian war refugees and it is both touching and terrifying. Politics are hardly mentioned in the book though when war has destroyed your home and livelihood, blinded your wife and killed your young son, the reasons for that war lose its meaning. The story follow Nuri and Afra Ibrahim as they escape from Aleppo and make the perilous journey to Britain after their son, same, dies. Nuri narrates the story.*

*This book took me on a journey that drastically changed my opinion on refugees. How can we dare stand in our ivory towers and criticise those who have had to flee their countries because their lives are crumbling around them and they lose everything? Their courage not to lose dignity and hope is amazing. That's why they come here and we need to embrace them not send them away. We need to understand and this book is a great place to start. I thoroughly recommend it to everyone.*

Barbara G

### REVIEW FEEDBACK

*Radio Girl and Dark Emu are still getting likes and I believe one library has been asked to stock the Secret Life of Trees. Let us know if you enjoyed the books and suggest others for us to share.*



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## **DIARY DATES**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

*Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2020*

*11:00 at the Rockingham Central Library*

Some of the committee have renominated and we have also received several new nominations.

In case you were wondering, the committee job list in this edition shows you who does what.

Come along and have your say, we will count all the votes !



### **END OF YEAR GET TOGETHER LUNCH**

*Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 at 12:30 (after the AGM)*

at the WING BO Chinese Restaurant

located at 6 Cessnock Way, Rockingham

Cost for the Lunch Special Menu ranges from \$12 to \$16  
or choose a la carte if your desire



*A gilded photo frame and a simple plastic frame can  
hold pictures of the same sentimental value.*



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## WRITE ON

Inspired by the amazing Rhuwina our writers have more contributions for your enjoyment.

With food as a focus this time, I am sure you will identifying with these contributions and either laugh or cry along, or they may just stir up lots of memories.

### *Good meals do not need to be expensive, just meaningful as Bernadette recounts*

One of the best meals I have ever had was bananas with French bread. No money in the bank, very little money in the wallet. Paris, beautiful, magical city of love, even on an empty stomach. Bananas are cheap and filling and the break, well that was to die for, as they like to say. Soft inside and crisp but not too sharp on the outside; baked fresh twice a day – and cheap.

There was some better left in the food bag, you had to have a food bag when you backpacked around Europe. Living in a tent you carried, sleeping on overnight trains when you could. The backpack was heavy and the campsite many kilometres from the station. The Eurail train pass paid for.

How far is five kilometres? I asked

Just keep walking we'll get there soon" my future husband answered

It was a Friday in June 1976 the expected bank transfer had not arrived. "You will have to wait until Monday," the bank teller informed us. A warm summer's day, people everywhere. We sat on the West Bank of the river Seine, hung our legs over the side, dipping our toes towards the water. Bananas, French bread and cheap wine. I am in Paris.



### *or a not so palatable meal but memorable never the less . . . from Bronwen*

The hum hit us first. Large black flies claimed the ceiling, walls, bench top and most prized, the chicken. The chicken, a scrawny specimen, lay on the stone bench top, the ambient heat yellowing its sagging uncooked skin and what little fat it had congealing. "Shit" muttered Michael. We stood in stunned silence, chocking back our nausea as we watched our genial host demonstrate of how to cook a traditional tagine. Chicken and assorted vegetable, herbs and spices ended up in the pot. This was to be our evening meal.

Back in bar, cold drinks in hand we agreed that we'd seek an alternative meal that evening. Eating options in Ait Ben Haddou, on the fringe of the Sahara, were limited, in fact we had no choice. The only restaurant there was closed leaving the only option a dubious looking Pizza place. Picturing the fly blown chicken, we ordered a pizza. Twenty minutes later, a slightly charred, miserable looking effort appeared. By now quite hungry we cut into it. The realization that what we thought were olives scattered on top were in fact baked on flies, seemed somehow inevitable.

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We trudged back to our hotel room and after downing a stiff gin and tonic we sat on the rickety veranda outside devouring the last of the dates we had bought at the market the day before.



*or maybe a mysterious disaster . . . As related by Linda*

There was tension as she walked into the room. A lull in the conversation, furtive glances and backs turned in her direction. Eliana walked confidently to the bar “A scotch and soda please”. Almost immediately, “Please make your way to your tables” was announced.

Rain began to fall softly on the marquee roof as the bridal party took their places. Staff hurried to close the side panels just as the wind picked up whipping one of the panels from a young girls hand, it sailed towards a large pile of presents knocking over a long box, and like a domino effect it hit a stand holding a huge ornate flower arrangement which in turn flattened the six tiered wedding cake. Several members of the bridal party had jumped up to try and save the cake, one grabbing a rope securing the chandelier which came crashing down onto the buffet table. Chaos erupted.

Eliana walked out with a glance over her shoulder and a satisfied grin on her face. Linda



*or a childhood memory is stirred as Esther recounts . . .*

I was only a child of 5 and the family were to get together for the Christmas lunch. I was very excited as it was a rare occasion, my Irish Grandfather Grogan was to be present to celebrate with us.

What I remember still with horror, is a day or so before Christmas Day Grandfather turned up at our home on his horse and cart with two wild ducks that he had shot. I had never seen a dead duck, and I was mesmerised by their glorious, coloured feathers of green and black. They were the most beautiful creatures I had ever seen., I felt sad at having to strip the feathers off. After 75 years I still remember how upsetting it was to sit on the back veranda with the family pulling out the gloriously coloured feathers of those ducks.

My Mother proceeded to cook for the big day, but when the duck was served I found that I could not eat it as the taste was so strong. Being wild birds my grandfather should have hung them for a day, to let the blood run.

This incident must have had an effect on me, as I have never eaten duck again. Currently I have two lovely old ducks out in my backyard.

Grandfather died on Christmas Eve the following year.



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*or a new beginning . . . as told by Diana*

Filing nervously into the Nurses Dining Room on our first morning of training, very conscious of our stiffly starched uniforms, complete with collar, cuffs and frilled cap, a motley group, only having met for the first time the evening before.

The room was painted an institutional shade of green, with high ceilings and windows. However, the tables were nicely laid, there was fruit and cereal in bowls ready for us to help ourselves. We chatted stiltedly as we ate.

Suddenly, with a flourish the kitchen door flew open and in came what appeared to be a procession of maids, dressed in bright lilac overalls carrying the cooked breakfast. Anticipating something like scrambled eggs, I couldn't believe it when placed in front of me was a plate with two large thick slices of corned beef which had been dipped in batter and deep fried, the grease already congealing on the plate. I had never seen anything like it and my stomach, already on edge, turned over.

"You want tomato sauce?" asked one of the ladies in lilac.



Sometimes it is cooking the meal that brings memories flooding back too.

*not so pleasantly as with Leonie*

The worst meal I ever had was the first meal I cooked for my husband. I roasted a chicken for dinner. When I bought it, I was so pleased with the price. It was a boiler, not a roaster – and that was only the first problem, of many, for the dinner and the marriage. "Act in haste, repent at leisure", as my Nana used to say.

My husband's reaction to my mistake (buying a boiler rather than roaster), my embarrassment, my being upset, apologetic even, was a truer indication of his feelings for me than he had shown before. A real eye opener.

I was an eighteen-year-old naïve kid, not his mum. I couldn't cook but I was pretty hot.

"You can't have everything" (Nana again)

The vegetables went from crispy to over-cooked as I waited in vain for the chicken to cook. Our relationship went from tentative happiness, to disappointment, to dislike, and a realisation that my cooking skills were almost as bad as my judgement in a life partner. My cooking improved over time.

Our marriage ended before my self-esteem was completely decimated.

"Every cloud has a silver lining" – thanks Nana.



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*or has Marie Claire admitting . . . BAKING IS NOT MY THING!*

One of the worst meals I ever cooked was when I decided to bake a French apple pie.? And true to my cooking's reputation ....it was a disaster!

" Cheri, remember when I baked my first apple pie?"

" How can I forget it, I almost broke a tooth over it! " We are both smiling at the memory of my first attempt at baking.

" Yeah, but it looked sooo good." Thinking, I should have tasted it first, but then I was in my early twenties more adventurous than cautious.

" It was so dry and hard to eat." He's laughing at me now

"OK, OK, but I baked it with LOVE" I argue in my defence.

" Yes, I know you did," He said.

Silences...We are both in our own thoughts. I should have used more than one egg with a full packet of flour. That's why the dough was so hard, could not cut it with a knife, we had to bang it hard on the table to break it into pieces, and dunk it in our morning cafe au lait.

But we managed to eat it all...Because it was baked with love!



Thanks to all our writers, there are more . . . you'll just have to wait for the next edition for the rest.

I hope you have all enjoyed the read as much as the writers have enjoyed their classes.



### *The Joy of Language*

*In Indonesian - AIR means WATER*

*In German and Danish - GIFT means POISON*

*In Polish - BRAT means BROTHER*

*In Danish - FART means SPEED*



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**2021**

I feel that it is almost tempting fate to be talking of our courses next year, but all being well courses are currently under consideration for Term One - The final selection depends on the availability of lecturers at our term times.

**AMONG THE MIX FOR FIRST SEMESTER 2012**  
are some old favourites and some new offerings -

Old favourites are likely to include Charles Oxnard with more Medicine and Science and Carl Altmann with Art Appreciation. New courses could include; History– D-day and its significance. Literature – a couple under consideration – 21st Century Media, Photography, a new language again a couple being investigated. World Affairs – a post Trump World a touch of Religion with Judaism.

As you see much work is going on investigating possibilities at present.

**WATCH THIS SPACE !**

Hands on learning this time is The Secrets of Creating Abstract Art with Judy Kirkpatrick  
(at the Autumn Centre on Fridays)

French and Writing have both proved very popular, ongoing classes depend on the current students being willing to continue for another term. And the recruitment of a few new faces - but are still very much in the mix.

Remember, if you have a contribution for the next edition just sent it to -

malarockingham@gmail.com

Until next time, Stay well and happy.

“The meaning of life is not being dead” – so let’s all get on and enjoy it.

**Bronwen Usher**



*A Ford will drive you on the same route as a Jaguar*

