

# MALA MESSENGER

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

**September 2021**

## **FROM THE CHAIR**

Term Three is over and seems to have been enjoyed by all our members who attended. The evaluation sheets were very positive. How quickly the year passes, we now head to the final term of the year with a new set of courses to stimulate your learning appetite.

This term we have a couple of things to keep in mind. The AGM season is upon us. Our AGM will be on Wednesday of 17th November and the Association AGM is on Monday 22nd November. We do need a quorum of members to attend and to elect a new committee for the upcoming year. We are hoping for some new faces who can help us drive MALA forward into 2022. As each branch must send members to the Association meeting to meet our quorum requirements, please consider that meeting too.

We hope that 2022 will be a calm, uncomplicated year, free from the scourge of Covid, although optimism and faith in increasing vaccination rates is all we can base that hope upon. Realistically every course we manage to get in is a bonus.

Shortly we will be asking you to vote on ratifying the Constitution – yes it has taken a LONG time to work through and have all committees agree. I will let you know as soon as the document is available for you to access. We will have to call a General Meeting of members to ratify it before we can say it is finally done.

No doubt the weather will be a little warmer before Term Four arrives, but until then keep warm, keep well and keep happy and daily be thankful for the freedoms that we have here in WA.

**Bronwen Usher**

**Chair**



### **A Few Words to Ponder – or use as you require**

- Snolly goster - a dishonest politician - thank heaven we don't have any of those !!
- Poon - even up a wobbly table - a much needed word I find.
- Hurple - hunch into yourself as you walk in the cold or wind - a winter winner.
- Eye Servant - someone who only works while being observed - sound familiar?



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## **TERM FOUR**

### **Term Four looks like this :**

- 9:30 Alexey Muraviev with Threats and Challenges to International Security  
Today and Tomorrow - Implications for Australia
- 11:30 Meera Finnigan is back with Core Ideas of Philosophy
- 11:30 Helen Iles begins to Polish, Present and Publish
- 13:30 Dr Chris Meredith joins us for DNA Detective Wear Many Hats

**Check out the synopsis and get the details.**



### **ENROLMENT DAY**

**29<sup>th</sup> September**

**from 10:00 – 11:30**

**in the Foyer of the Library**



### **◆◆◆ STOP PRESS ◆◆◆**

A new course has been added to the first published synopses and enrolment form.

A new enrolment form is attached.

Dr Michael Prince will be back with a course on Social Justice.

This course will be at 13:30 – 15:00

**\*\* If you have already enrolled for a course and wish to add this one to your list, please phone on 0455 373 589**

**\*\* If you have not yet filled in your form, just proceed as usual.**



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## TERM FOUR COURSES

**9:30 – 11:00**    **A/Prof Alexey Muraviev**

**Title: Threats and Challenges to International Security Today and Tomorrow: Implications for Australia.**

This lecture series will provide an overview of the current and emerging threats and challenges that affect and will affect the international threat environment. They include threats of globalised terrorism and cyber threats; state to state competition and the arms race; alliances (ANZUS, NATO, Russia-China possible alliance); environmental and health threats; implications for Australia and our national security.

Dr Alexey D Muraviev – Associate Professor of National Security and Strategic Studies School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry – Curtin University.

**11:30 – 13:00**    **Meera Finnigan**

**Title: Core Ideas of Philosophy**

On this five-week course we will explore some big ideas of philosophy that have had relevance for thousands of years of intellectual thought. What does it mean to be human? What is happiness? What is truth? What if anything can humans know for certain? How should we treat non-human animals, the environment? The consideration of these ideas is sure to spark interesting discussion, so if you enjoy engaging in thoughtful discourse, please join us for this exploration of diverse and enthralling philosophical ideas.

Meera Finnigan has a Master's Philosophy, now semi-retired from academia and enjoying bringing critical thinking to community education.

**11:30 – 13:00**    **Helen Iles**

**Title: Polish, Present and Publish**

This workshop takes you through the editing techniques that tighten your prose and polishes your words to make your writing shine.

1. The Editing process – 2 week course
2. Book and Covers Design – 2 week course
3. The Self Publishing Process – 1 week.

Helen Iles is an award-winning author; a poet; editor; manuscript assessor; writing coach and publisher with over 20 years in the industry, who guides writers through the writing process and onto publishing their fiction and non-fiction stories.

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**13:30 – 15:00 Dr Christopher Meredith**

**Title: DNA Detectives Wear Many Hats**

To catch criminals, serial killers and sexual predators, DNA Detectives wear forensic hats; when dealing with mass disaster victims and paternity issues, they don genealogical hats; to solve mysteries about our ancestors, they put on anthropological hats, and when tracking down human disease genes, they reach for medical genetic hats. This course describes how decoding messages in human DNA solved twenty-four very different cases from catching killers, Identifying old bones: answering questions of inheritance; discovering human diseases genes in WA to gene based therapies to save lives.

Dr Chris Meredith is a retired School Teacher (9 years) and Academic (36 years). He was the Foundation Course Coordinator of a degree in Human Biology at ECU, the Chief Examiner for TEE Human Biology (5 years), won the Vice Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award (ECU) and was a former Honorary Research Fellow at the Australian Neuromuscular Research Institute. Vice Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award (ECU) and was a former Honorary Research Fellow at the Australian Neuromuscular Research Institute.

**13:30 – 15:00 Dr Michael Prince**

**Title: Social Justice**

In this series of five lectures, we explore the concept of 'social justice' as we currently seem to make sense out of it. We will discuss how we tend to focus most often on issues of representation in terms of separate categories like 'race', 'gender' and 'sexuality', and less so on how these categories might intersect with each other in complicated ways in real people's lived experiences. We will also discuss the often-overlooked issue of distribution of wealth in terms of 'class'. Along the way, we will investigate topics such as the recognition of First Australians in the Constitution, Queer theory and what it tells us about same-sex marriage;, something called 'homonationalism' and its relationship to Trumpism and the idea of 'western civilization', and how we think about Islam and asylum seekers. A stimulating course for the thinker and questioner.

Dr Prince was the Academic Chair of Murdoch's Australia Indigenous studies program for the past 12 years. He has taught on a wide range of issues and topics relating to Australian political history, indigenous popular culture social justice and the intersections of Indigenous and Western philosophies of human /nature relationships.



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## WRITERS CORNER

We all have a moment in life that changes things forever maybe it's when we first met that someone special or the scales fall from our eyes or we accept the challenge of an unexpected opportunity. Our writers have been remembering a few of their life changing moments. I hope you enjoy them and it triggers thoughts of a defining moment of your own.

For Diana it was an unexpected opportunity

I remember the moment when I first saw the commercial kitchen that was to be my domain for the next eighteen months. I was now Chef to the World Headquarters of Girl Guiding and also of Pax Lodge, the 72 bed guest house next door

Three weeks earlier I had stood stunner in my kitchen in Perth staring at a letter. "I've been invited to be the chef at Pax Lodge in London" I told my husband in disbelief. "I can't do that, I'm an amateur" I had cooked for the fire guides for some years, conferences camps etc., but nothing like this.

"Well, I think you can and you should" said my husband.

The kitchen was a dream come true, it had everything you could need and more!

Over the next eighteen months I cooked meals ranging from feasts, to fish and chips, almost any ethnic and cultural possibility. Sometimes feeding a hundred, sometimes only twelve. I even became quite proficient at themed birthday cakes.

Every day I laughed with and enjoyed the company of the young women who came from all parts of the world to work, study or just to visit. I came to appreciate that no matter our cultural differences we are all able to work and share life together.

I came home after a wonderful and exhausting time, so pleased I went but glad to be back with my husband and family.

For Bernadette, a new life that would change the family plans.

I remember the moment I first set eyes on you. Dark hair, dark eyes, the promise of what was to come.

"Don't cry" my husband said. "We will work it out." He wiped hands on the oily rag. He'd bought a Ford Transit. He was going to make it into a camper van and we were going to travel around Australia. How excited he'd been. Two children, a boy aged nine and a girl of seven, everything I could ever want. Why had I let this happen, because it was my fault, my responsibility.

My plan was a new job, getting on top of the bills, managing the mortgage, Is this guilt? No fear, fear of what I could lose

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And I love you, I could write all the words, but words can get in the way. Know that I love you, have always loved you, even when I didn't know it. I will always love you. I remember that moment when I first set eyes on you.

"Have a shower, get cleaned up" the nurse said. I didn't need a shower, I needed you.

"Where is he?" The nurse handed me a bundle. Dark hair, dark eyes, in my arms.



For Marie Claire - the revelation of a first born child

I remember when I first set eyes on him. It was a beautiful cold winter morning in early July. That day changed my life forever in a big way. It all happened in a lift going down three level to the main entrance. We were three in the lift, a young lady dressed up in soft pale light green, me, not looking at my best and in the corner HIM. The first time I set eyes on him I instantly knew it was love at first sight! No doubt about it. I felt o alive with q profound sense of destiny.

Between the third and second floor all I wanted to do was, discreetly from the corner of my eye look at

By the first floor I started to be anxious. A spark of excitement was new to me, but what if? Would I be good enough for him? How would I cope?

Then the door opened, a man holding big bouquet of flowers was waiting for me by the entrance. My husband. "I was so scared" was my husband's greeting "You were so pale, lost a lot of blood, the doctor said" But, I wasn't listening to my husband's concerns as I gently pushed the little hospital bundle out of the lift with our brand new baby inside. Our first born. A boy! It's a boy! so beautiful, so perfect! Jacques was ecstatic!



For Bronwen – a childhood moment regretted

It was the summer I turned 12. Hot days, holidays time at the farm.

I was finally big enough and deemed competent enough to go on the Thursday night shoot, a rite of passage for farm kids. Clinging on for dear life bouncing over paddocks in the old Ute, spotlight flashing and dancing over the landscape, was exhilarating. Gary the best marksman holding his 22 Rifle at the ready. Richie on the spotlight. The two dogs alert and sniffing the air. I kept out of the way.

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Alongside the tree line, the engine idled, the light swung then stopped, a row of rabbits caught in its glare. Crack, the explosive sound of the shell firing reverberated through me. The dogs were dispatched and soon dead rabbit after dead rabbit appeared beside the Ute. An hour passed, moving, stopping, shooting and collecting. It was then that Gary offered me his gun. I could have said no – I was a good shot, everybody said so. I took it. The kangaroo stood still, seemingly frozen, captured in the glare of the spotlight's beam. What was I thinking! I took aim and fired. I could have said no – I was a good shot, everybody said so. I took it. The kangaroo stood still, seemingly frozen, captured in the glare of the spotlight's beam. What was I thinking! I took aim and fired. A good shot – I heard the shouts of approval as the roo dropped like a stone.

Instantly the enormity of what I'd done engulfed me in a tsunami of guilt. Silently I handed back the gun. My heart pounded, my mind screamed. I felt dizzy. I shut my eyes tight against an avalanche of tears. It was in that moment I learned that killing isn't power, its destruction, - it's the loss of inner peace, its haunting memories and shame. I grieved for that roo for a long time. I was only twelve, but it is that moment I would take back in a heartbeat.



And finally ..

A moment in time when we are left to imagine the ending of the story

Good Luck with the Game

The first moment I first set eyes on Gary he blocked the sun. His six foot four, well-sculptured frame threw a big shadow. He stood in front of me. I was selling raffle tickets at the South Fremantle Football Club. Three for a shilling as I recall. "Give us six". A lively voice said as a large paw shot out with two bob at the ready. I looked up and blinked then began to count off the tickets. You're new aren't you? The voice continued.

"Just filling in for a friend" I responded, shifting position to see him. Bright blue eyes played in his weather browned face. The grin, cheeky and lopsided was topped by corn coloured hair shorn to within an inch of its life. "Here" I said handing him the tickets. "Good luck for the game today, it will be a hard one I reckon." He took the tickets, brushing my hand softly as he did so. "Any chance one of these could have your phone number on the back? He asked quietly, trying to look very earnest.

"Hope you have better luck with the game" I laughed. Cocking his head ruefully like a rejected little boy he hefted his kit onto his shoulder and loped off to the clubrooms. Watching him go I suddenly realized that my heart was pounding just a little too fast.



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## FROM THE BOOKSHELF

This month the selections come from Sarah

Sarah reviewed **“Where the Crawdads Sing” by Delia Owens**

I found this a strangely haunting story. It is the story of the ‘Marsh Girl’ a mysterious girl who has survived on her own in the marshes of the North Carolina coast that she calls home. Her friends are the wildlife and birds as she grows she become lonely and knows she wants to be loved. Two young men from the town become intrigued, one by her wild beauty, the other by her sensitive and intelligent interaction with nature. When the dead body of one of the men is found in the marsh she is the natural suspect. A remarkable murder mystery story, a beautiful coming of age story and the celebration of life and nature.

I loved it.



### Feedback from Readers

The Raven in the Foregate by Ellis Peters elicited four responses. Phil, Peter, Janet and Neil

This story is one of many in a series called the Cadfael Chronicles. There seems to be quite a fan club out there for this series albeit that it was written in the late 1980’s.

The combination of murder mystery, set against historic events of the 12 century when anarchy and conniving were a way of life, gently mixed with monastic life make a thoroughly entertaining and thoughtful read.

Phil also adds that there is a series available on DVD for those who become addicted as he is

Thanks one and all the reviews and feedback. Keep them coming.

Ed.



### Nothing like the logic of kids!!

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|---------------|---|---|
| Miss aged six | – | “Mum, I’m just not going to school any more.”   |
| Perplexed Mum | – | “But why darling?”  |
| Miss aged six | – | “Well . . . on Monday our teacher told us 2 and 6 make 8 and yesterday she said that 3 and 5 make 8 and today she said (voice rising in indignation) 4 and 4 make 8 ! So . . . I’m not going back to school until she can make up her mind !!!” |



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## THAT'S ALL FOLKS

I look forward to seeing you all again in Term Four for another great term. Do think about coming to our AGM and /or the Association AGM -we need the numbers- and we have a new committee to elect.

I'll leave you with the words of the year for 2020

The new word for 2020 was AIRGASM defined as The intense pleasure of leaving a public place and taking off your mask. Probably not as applicable for blessed life we live here in WA but for our family and friends in the East and Overseas it certainly resonates.

**Bronwen Usher**  
**Editor**



*A recent statistic states that over a million Aussie kids want to clean up the world.*

*Great !*

*It missed the bit saying that a million parents would love it if they started with their bedrooms.*

