



THE RAILWAY EXPRESS #8

A SPECIAL WEEKLY NEWSLETTER TO HELP US STAY CONNECTED

AROUND THE HOUSE

Hello Railway House community,

We hope this finds you well and feeling positive about the next phase of the easing of restrictions, which starts on Monday. Life is certainly starting to feel a little more normal, with students returning to school and restaurants and cafes opening their doors again. Not everybody will feel ready for this next phase though and that is perfectly fine. It is important to take your time and do what is right for you.

The reopening of neighbourhood houses is allowed in this phase and we are excited that we are able to resume some of our indoor programs! We will need to plan very carefully, considering the physical distancing requirement of 4 square metres per person as well as the implementation of measures to protect everyone's health and safety. We'll spend next week focusing on our plans for the safe return of our programs and hope to start welcoming back our first groups in small numbers the following week, on **Tuesday 9 June**. More information on this next week.



This week our brand-new walking group – The Jay Walkers – met for the first time on Tuesday, It was a crisp and sunny autumn morning - perfect walking conditions! **Jane, Joy, Jill, Joanna, Pam, Pat** and **Donald** met at Railway House before setting off for a leisurely walk around the local area and enjoying a takeaway coffee. If you would like to join this group please feel free to come along on Tuesdays at 10.30am.

In other news, our newly established Fundraising Subcommittee met on Wednesday. **Nick** and **Trish** met with **Lisa C.** and **Alison** and had a very productive meeting to discuss fundraising ideas for the House. Ideas included fundraising events such as Trivia Night, a Barefoot Bowling evening and a Showcase for our creative groups. Watch this space!



It was great to have a visit from **Sue** and the **VCAL** students at the House this week! Alison did not miss the opportunity to get the students doing a few jobs, such as dropping off the soft plastics and food donations. So as to minimise the number of people on site, the students won't be returning to their usual activities at the House for the time being, however, a small number of them will make short visits to the House on Monday and Thursday mornings between 11am and 12pm so if you would like to book a car wash please call the office.

As mentioned in a previous newsletter, some VCAL students were matched with members of the Railway House community to **exchange letters and emails** during lock down and we have 11 students and community members participating. Sue would like to continue with this as a classroom project now that the students are back at school, and we are therefore looking for a further five **pen pals**. This project provides real life literacy practice for the students and is a great opportunity for intergenerational interactions. Please contact Alison at manager@railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au if you are interested.

Lastly, most of you will know that Railway House has long been a collection point for the **Salvation Army Asylum Seeker Resource Centre** – already experiencing increased demand after eligibility requirements for support services were tightened in 2018. Now, the additional impact of COVID-19 means that requests for **food relief** are at an all-time high, with many foodbanks struggling to keep their shelves full. If you would like to help, please grab some extra groceries and / or toiletries during your weekly shop. You can drop them at Railway House during office hours (currently 10:00 – 3:00, Monday to Thursday) and they are taken to the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Brunswick.

There is a full list of items needed on our website under the "Get Involved" tab.

Stay well and we look forward to seeing more of you over the coming weeks.

Alison, Lisa C, Lisa G and Jeff





YOUR NEWS: WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

The Tuesday morning **Knitting & Crochet Group** was very quick to migrate to an email group when Railway House had to close its doors to programs. They've been staying up to date with one another's news and sharing photos of their knitting projects, as well as tips and advice – just like they do in the face-to-face meetings! Lisa C. has been lucky enough to be in the email group and see firsthand all of the things they are creating.

This week we thought we'd share some of their marvellous projects with you:





Jumper by Janice P.



Jumper by Karen



Crochet repairs by Sandra



Tunic by Lyn



Speaking of knitting, **Maria Brandi** has finished the jumper we showed you last week. She would like to thank **Sandra** for helping her with the design.

We think it looks great, Maria!



YOUR NEWS: WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO? (TAKE 2)

MaryKae Wright has written in from her home in Rhode Island in the United States. MaryKae was visiting Melbourne earlier this year from the United States with her husband, who was on a sabbatical at Melbourne University. She popped into Railway House one day while exploring the neighbourhood, struck up conversation with Alison, and went on to join Jen's exercise classes and the bike riding group. A short but enjoyable relationship!



MaryKae at the Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary in Tasmania

"After catching the last Qantas flight out of Australia on March 24, and cancelling the last 5 weeks of our sabbatical, we've been adjusting to lockdown back in the USA. Although we just began phase 1 of reopening a few days ago, our governor in Rhode Island is still allowing no more than 5 people to gather even while social distancing, except for masked appearances at essential businesses.

Some nonessential stores and restaurants are just starting to open with controlled numbers and regulations. If things continue to improve, we may be able to

get to phase 2 by June 1 and phase 3 by July 1, but our town's famous 4th of July celebration has been shut down for the first time since 1785 and our son has had to postpone his June wedding for a year. Last weekend we did manage to throw a virtual bridal shower for his fiancé with 50 participants munching on delicious luncheon food we prepared and delivered to them all over southern New England the day before!

We miss the excitement of the "real" Melbourne, the amazing beauty of Victoria and its unique animals, and especially the bike group that I enjoyed on Wednesdays! Jen's exercise group was also a lucky find for me. It's exactly what I needed - small group of nice women, twice/week, close enough for me to bike to, and just the right amount of workout.



MaryKae's husband Mike on the empty plane on the last leg of their flight home.



Jen is very pleasant and experienced and mixes things up enough to make it interesting! Most of the gym workouts I've done before have been very tedious, but not hers!

I wish we had neighbourhood houses like this in Rhode Island. I'm very glad to have met you soon after our arrival in January, Alison! We will never forget our 11 weeks of adventures in Down Under and all of you wonderful people."



WRITER'S CORNER

SOMETHING IN A NAME

by Don Blackwood

Sadly, my mother has long passed away; she died on Australia Day 2001 after a series of strokes. She was 89.

A fine, elegant woman, although a born worrier and anxious, she managed through the Great War, Depression and World War 2 and other tough family times. My mother was a thoughtful and generous person.

And my mother loved to write, and as I draw this piece together, I think of her. And then her husband Jack...And so it goes on...all those thoughts and memories.

These are extraordinary times we now live in. We'll ride them through as our ancestors did I'm sure. We'll celebrate the end of this universal brute of a thing COVID-19 when it passes into the never never...

For the moment, however, I can't stop thinking about my mother. Born in 1911; it was the same year as George 5th ascended to the British throne. My grandfather's name was George. His daughter, my mother, was named Corona.

22/3/2020

Don is in Barry Dickins' Writing Group



LET'S TALK FOOD

This week we bring you a cornucopia of healthy and warming vegetable recipes from our Around the Table facilitator, **Georgia Karavis**. The group cooked these dishes together in June, 2019.

All of the recipes are designed to serve around 8 people as part of a multi-course meal, so simply scale down for however many people you are serving! Georgia's recipes are very casual and forgiving, so feel free to experiment with quantities and ingredients, too.

ROASTED CAPSICUM & CARROT SOUP

Ingredients:

- 1 kilo carrots, peeled
- 800 gram tin crushed tomatoes
- 3 red capsicums (you could also use jar or deli roasted capsicum strips)
- 4L chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 onion
- ½ celery
- Oil
- Salt and pepper
- Herbs of your choice, parmesan / yoghurt / cream to serve.



Method:

1. If using fresh capsicums, cut into wedges and bake until just charred.
2. Dice onion, carrot and celery, then fry in large pot with a little oil until onion is translucent.
3. Add stock and tomatoes and bring to boil – keep on boil-simmer until carrots are cooked.
4. Once cooked, add capsicum, then blitz and adjust seasoning to taste, and sprinkle with herbs.
5. Serve sprinkled with chopped herbs, parmesan or a swirl of yoghurt or cream.



CAULIFLOWER, SILVERBEET & GOATS CHEESE GRATIN

Ingredients:

- 500g - 1kg cauliflower
- ¼ cup olive oil
- salt and pepper
- 200g silverbeet
- 8 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- 2 tablespoon thyme leaves
- 1 tablespoon finely grated lemon rind
- ½ cup grated parmesan
- 200g goats curd



Method:

- Preheat oven to 200 degrees.
- Cut cauliflower into florets and drizzle with olive oil, and season with salt and pepper then bake in a deep, lined dish for 20 minutes or until golden.
- Cut silverbeet into chunks, then blanch in hot water for 2 minutes – drain and pat dry.
- Remove cauliflower from oven and reduce temperature to 160 degrees.
- Place eggs, milk, thyme, lemon, parmesan and half of goat's curd in a bowl, then add salt and pepper and whisk to combine.
- Pour mix over cauliflower, top with silverbeet and remaining goat curd then bake for 40 minutes or until just set.

WINTER GREENS, BACON, BREADCRUMB & HERB FRY-UP

Ingredients:

- Mixed winter greens – i.e. zucchini, sprouts, green beans, silver beet, broccoli etc.
- 300g bacon
- 2 handfuls mixed herbs – i.e. dill, parsley, oregano etc.
- Panko bread crumbs
- Roughly chopped almonds

Method:

- Cube zucchini and roughly chop greens.
- Cube bacon.
- Heat a large saucepan with a little olive oil, then add bacon and allow fat to render out.
- Add greens and sauté until just cooked.
- In the meantime, heat a small pan and toast bread crumbs and almonds with a little oil until golden.
- Roughly chop herbs and mix ½ through bread crumbs and ½ through veggies.
- Sprinkle bread crumbs over the top and serve.



GRILLED CIABATTA WITH CAFÉ DE PARIS BUTTER

Ingredients:

- 1 – 2 loaves of ciabatta
- 250g unsalted butter
- 4 anchovy fillets
- 2 tablespoons baby capers
- 1 clove garlic, crushed + 4 cloves for rubbing.
- 1 cup parsley leaves
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- black pepper

Method:

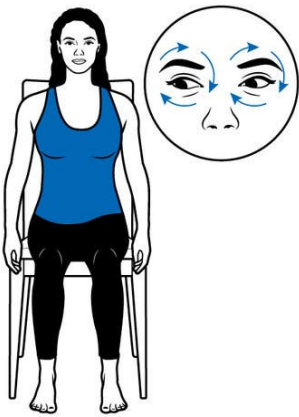
- Cube butter and soften.
- Roughly chop anchovy, capers and parsley.
- Add all to food processor and blitz until well combined.
- Scoop into bowl and place in fridge until ready to serve.
- Heat a touch of oil in a pan.
- Cut ciabatta into slices, and rub with peeled garlic cloves.
- Fry bread slices until golden – spread with butter to serve.



* You can also grill your ciabatta under an oven griller, on the barbecue, or even toast it in a toaster!

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

While the beautiful autumn weather has meant that most of us are getting out and about regularly, many people will find that they are also sitting more than ever – whether it’s binge-watching a TV show, reading, attending a Zoom meeting or catching up on the endless flow of news online. This week we’ve brought you some simple and restorative stretches to help! They specifically designed to offset time spent sitting down, and can provide relief, restore muscle function and improve posture. Give them a try!



1. To alleviate strain and strengthen your **eyes**, try eye rolls. Sit up straight, and look down to your right, roll your eyes toward the sky, then to the left and down back to the ground. Then roll your eyes in the opposite direction. Repeat five times.



2. For seated stretch to help you open your **shoulders**, release tight chest muscles and combat poor posture, scoot to the edge of your chair or stool, extend your arms behind your back and interlace your fingers. Try to keep the palms together and actively roll your shoulders back and puff up your chest. To deepen the stretch, start to lift your clasped hands. Hold the stretch for up to a minute.



3. Another seated back stretch, this one to release compression between the **vertebrae**. First, inhale and sweep your arms overhead. Hold your left wrist with your right hand, keep your arms by your ears, exhale and bend toward the right. Hold the stretch for five breaths, inhale to centre, switch your hands, exhale and bend to the left. Hold for five breaths. Inhale back to centre, release the grip on your hands, exhale and twist to the right, letting your hands fall to the outside of your thigh or chair. Hold for five breaths, inhale to centre and repeat to the left.



4. For a tight **back**, try a seated cat-cow stretch. Sit at the edge of your chair with both feet flat on the floor. Rest your palms on your knees. As you inhale, press the chest forward. As you exhale, tuck your chin to your chest and round the spine forward. Repeat three to five times, following your breath.



5. A modified yoga down-dog pose using your desk or kitchen bench will stretch the entire back of your body, including your **hamstrings** and **lower spine**. Start by standing, with your chair out of the way, and place your palms flat on your table. Walk backward until your arms are extended and your body is in an L shape with your feet under your hips. Press your hands into the table, elongate your back and push your hips up and back. Hold for five to ten breaths.

LOCKDOWN LAUGHS



AND FINALLY...

Don't forget our SHORT, SHORT Story Competition. Just finish the sentence below. It could be just a few words, a sentence or two, or more! We will print our favourite ending in a future newsletter for everyone to enjoy and award a prize, too.

"Alice loved rainbows. She often wondered what was there, at the rainbow's end? Perhaps..."

