



THE RAILWAY EXPRESS #10

A SPECIAL WEEKLY NEWSLETTER TO HELP US STAY CONNECTED

AROUND THE HOUSE

Dear Railway House community,

We hope that you are all in reasonably good spirits despite everything that is going on around us and that you have been able to get outside (albeit in a mask!) to enjoy the beautiful winter sunshine this week. It's nice to think that the last month of Winter is almost upon us and that we'll be soon be heading into Spring! Definitely something for us all to look forward to.



ZOOM STAFF MEETING

The start of Term 3 at the House has been pretty much the same as the start of Term 2 and staff still can't get used to the absence of people around the place. We stay busy but the House is such a different place. In our staff meeting this week we were reminiscing about Railway House pre COVID-19 - full of people, life and laughter. We miss the sound of our wonderful **choir** on Wednesdays mornings and our chats outside with members of our **bike riding** group before they head off on their ride; we miss the chatter and laughter of our **knitting** and **community lunch** groups, and the beautiful aromas coming from the kitchen when cooking class is on; we miss the **VCAL** students (and their coffee cart!), the local kids who come over for **after school activities**, and all the people who drop in to Railway House every day. We hope to have you all back in the not too distant future.

Luckily we have been able to move some of our programs online and in addition to **Tai Chi**, **Women's Exercise** and **Choir**, we are now running two **karate** classes a week via Zoom. In normal times these classes take place after hours when staff have left for the day so it has been really nice for Alison to meet some of the children for the first time (even if it is on a computer screen!). It is not too late to join any of these programs so if you are looking for a new activity and would like to join in a class, let us know. You can try any of them for free before committing to the term. Some of our other groups are still connected with one another via WhatsApp and email, and apparently our bike riders have been enjoying a trivia quiz via Zoom of a Wednesday morning, courtesy of quiz master Robert!



In other news, a huge thank you to all those who recently **donated** money to Railway House. Our recent (and first ever) donation drive was a great success and we have raised almost \$3000, which included a generous donation from the **Carlton Rotary Club**. These funds will go directly to supporting our programs and activities. If you are able to make a donation, please go to the **Financial Donations** section of our website for more information.

We would also like to encourage all of you - program participants, tutors, volunteers and supporters - to become **members** of Railway House. As a member you are able to propose and vote on motions at Annual General Meetings and nominate to be a member of our Committee of Management and the more members we have, the more robust our organisation. Please go to the **Membership** section of our website for more information.

Don't forget, the office continues to be staffed Monday to Friday from **10am to 2pm** so please give us a call if you need assistance with anything or feel like a chat. Or if you are passing by, we would love to see you and are happy to have a (masked and distanced) chat outside 😊

Take care of yourselves. Let's all keep doing our bit and we will be back to some kind of normal soon.

Alison, Lisa C, Lisa G and Jeff



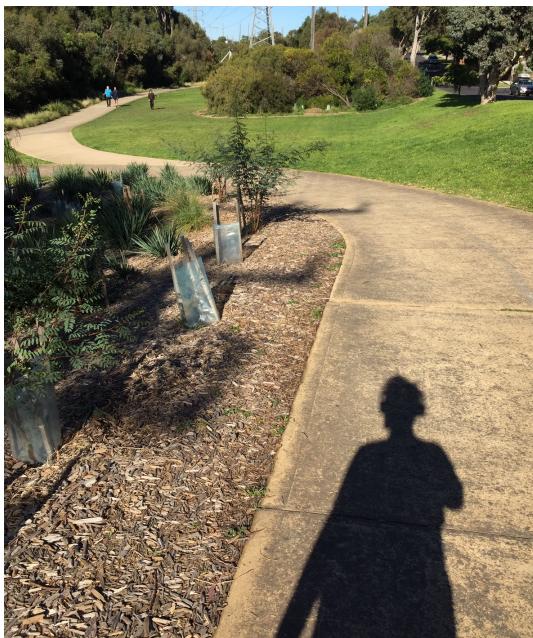
JEFF RECEIVING THE ROTARY CLUB CHEQUE ON BEHALF OF RAILWAY HOUSE





YOUR NEWS: WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

Sue, the Princes Hill Secondary College VCAL Coordinator, built a frog habitat in her garden. She is yet to spot any frogs residing there but is hoping that the arrival of Spring will see them take up residence.



ALISON'S SHADOW ON THE MERRI CREEK

Lisa C. has been making masks with her eldest daughter. They were both pleasantly surprised with the results!



SUE'S FROG HABITAT

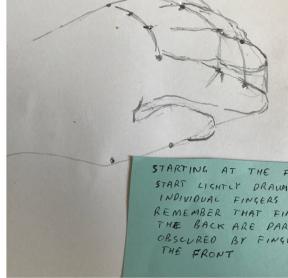
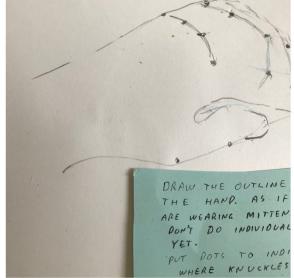
Alison has been doing a lot of jogging along the Merri Creek, which is right next to her house.



LISA'S MASKS



Our Art Group members have been busy working on projects set by their tutor, Damian. A few weeks ago it was a sketch of a hand. Great work, guys!



PIC•COLLAGE

DAMIAN'S DRAWING TUTORIAL



PIC•COLLAGE

SOME GREAT RENDITIONS BY PAULINE, VERONICA AND CHRIS



And David, a member of our bike riding group, has been digitising his half frame slides. This photo was taken in the summer of 1966-67 in Pardoo - four 19 year old students exploring the outback in a small 4-wheel drive. They got as far as Broome before cyclone Elsie hit and then travelled back through the desert to Alice Springs (getting bogged in the Peterman Ranges for two weeks on the way)

It is great to see some of the things people have been up to during lockdown.



PEN PAL PROJECT – PRINCES HILL SECONDARY COLLEGE



For a few months now, Railway House has been connecting local residents with VCAL students for a pen pal project.

The aim of the Pen Pal project is for the VCAL students to remain connected with Railway House during this period of remote learning when they are unable to visit the House. It also provides real life literacy practice for them as well as a nice opportunity for intergenerational interactions with members of the Railway House community.

We need a pen pal for Mikey, a Year 12 VCAL student at Princes Hill Secondary College, who is currently the only student in the group without a pen pal.

Please contact Alison at manager@railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au for more information or if you'd be interested in getting involved!

TOP PICKS



Carolyn wrote in to recommend Peter Temple's standout novel **Truth**, which won the Miles Franklin award in 2010. Deservedly so, she says.

"It powerfully depicts the injustices and moral uncertainties that plague Villani, Head of Homicide in Melbourne. A scorching summer Melbourne with bushfires raging , threatening the livelihood of his Vietnam veteran father Bob, his rundown farm and the forest they planted together.

Who else can capture the Australian idiom, locales and rhythms of speech so brilliantly? Temple's characters are defined by their lingo. He conjures up the lowlifes. The coppers, the racecourse touts as well as the supercilious tones of the money-made men and the morally bankrupt.

A gripping work, hard to put down. You will remember him for his Jack Irish novels which formed the basis of the ABC television series."

Carolyn's rating: ★★★★★



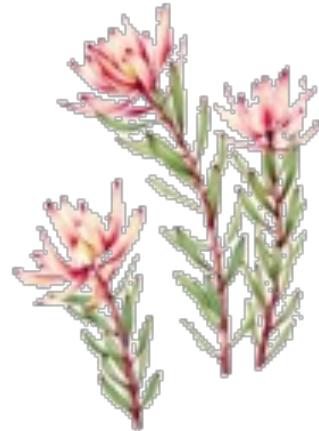
REFLECTIONS

Staff member **Lisa G.** wrote this heartfelt piece on the things that she misses about Railway House in "normal times". We are sure that many of her sentiments will resonate with our readers.

I miss the buzz and hum of the usual hive of Railway House activity Tuesday and Wednesdays, my work days. In my mind, these are the busiest and most colourful days of the week... but I suspect other days at Railway House are just as colourful! They are certainly the most colourful days of my week! I always leave with my 'social connection' cup full to the brim!

I miss the diversity! The mingling of ages, backgrounds and personalities that we share the space with ... **like** the kind and thoughtful conversations between **young** VCAL students and older members of creative groups such as knitting, art or writing...

I miss the friendly 'hellos' with those picking up a loaf of Sugardough bread, a sweet muffin or prized fruit loaf (thankfully some of this still happens on Tuesdays - outdoors now of course, at safe distance, we are mask-clad...).



I miss the meaningful conversations with people and being able to truly listen from the heart (as somehow happens in snippets amidst the array of activity) without having to first compute the distance between myself and the other person, whether it ought to be moved outside ('am I too close? Is this safe?' etc) all before (or during!!) the actual conversation!

I miss the luxury of things like the little table on wheels (that I once deemed an ugly eBay rip-off) covered with pretty blue Japanese fabric, that **is** wheeled over as a resting place for someone's cup of tea **when we** chat after community lunch on Wednesday... oh what a distant world that seems now..

But I am hopeful that we are keeping our web of connections alive through the many blessings afforded to us. The blessings of small and creative gestures of all the kind characters who contribute to the Railway House community in so many different ways.



LET'S TALK FOOD

This week **Lisa C.** from the office shares one of her favourite dishes, discovered while living in Jerusalem as a child in the late 1970's and eating it often at an open-air restaurant in Jericho. This recipe was created from memory by her mum, Alma. It is super easy to make, with only a few ingredients, but addictively delicious! You could serve it with a simple cucumber and tomato salad.

MUSAKHAN

Ingredients – serves 4

1 whole chicken, quartered (or 750 gms – 1 kilo chicken pieces, bone-in and skin on)

Olive oil

4 large onions, thinly sliced

4 tablespoons sumac*

1 lemon

4 large pita breads (halve them to single thickness or use smaller pitas for a lighter meal)

Salt

4 tablespoons pine nuts



Method

1. Brown chicken pieces well in olive oil in a skillet, cover, and cook until about half done
2. Remove chicken from skillet and set aside
3. Add sliced onions to oil in pan and cook for a few minutes to wilt onion well
4. Place pita breads on greased flat baking trays
5. Spread some of the onion and oil mixture onto each piece of bread
6. Place a chicken quarter (or piece) on each, skin side down
7. Squeeze lemon juice generously over chicken and season with salt
8. Spoon any remaining oil, onion and spice over chicken and sprinkle with pine nuts
9. Bake at 180 degrees for about 30 minutes, until chicken is tender and nicely browned.

*Sumac is a dark purple middle eastern spice (a ground dried berry, actually) that can be found at supermarkets and middle eastern groceries. It has a lemony, tart flavour.



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

This week we introduce Pat Rustad, a volunteer in the Learning Club on Monday afternoons.

Hi. I was born in the USA, but now call Australia home and eat Vegemite. I have lived in Australia for 43 years with most time in the inner city suburbs of Carlton, Fitzroy and Brunswick. After a career in education, I retired in early 2019. On one of my walks around Princes Park, I collected a copy of the Neighbourhood House programs. I was looking for volunteering opportunities and thought this would be a good place to start, as I enjoy

supporting my local community. The Learning Club, for primary aged students, seemed to be a good fit, so I joined Mary and the other volunteers in February 2019. Everyone was so welcoming and as expected, the kids taught me as much as I shared with them.

Away from the Railway House, I enjoy keeping fit with daily local walks and weekly Pilates sessions. I am also on our local neighbourhood committee to ensure development in our area is both sustainable and in keeping with the neighbourhood character. This has meant making new local friends, a great benefit in this very difficult time for all of us.



PAT AND CIANA DOING SOME READING

Not sure what retirement will look like for me however, I know it will include ongoing volunteering, theatre, especially musicals, movies, learning more about gardening, reading and just maybe a tap dancing class.

I am looking forward to the time when we can resume activities at the Railway House and connect with the staff, children, existing and new friends. Take care and stay well.





WRITER'S CORNER

PALE MORNING LIGHT

by Paul Mayfield

(Inspired by the painting 'Pale Morning Light' by Yvonne Audette)

Vital-pale, the morning light,
vivid with reflective bite,
valid in its lively right;
our vessel for perspective.

So who can say how faith is caught
or hope is found or love is sought?
Let's celebrate the priceless bliss
of living with so much amiss!

Mauve delights on river clay,
ochres light the break of day,
greens and blues break up the way;
our cause for consternation.

So who can say that faith is fraught,
or grace is lost or love is wrought?
Let's celebrate the priceless bliss
of living with so much amiss!

Layered life in paradox,
'lameds' rife in equinox,
urban-verve in chequered blocks;
our view for contemplation.

So who can say where love is wrought,
or mystic joy is sold and bought?
Let's celebrate perpetual-bliss
of living with so much amiss!



"PALE MORNING LIGHT" BY YVONNE AUDETTE

06/02/2015

Paul is a member of the Railway House choir



AND FINALLY...

Our wonderful choir teacher Flip sent in this image to share. She did note with some surprise that singing wasn't amongst the suggestions! With that in mind, here is a link to a song you might like to sing along to:

<https://enchantmentathamilton.org/20200601ForTheLongestTime.mp4>

Happiness Chemicals and how to hack them

DOPAMINE
THE REWARD CHEMICAL

- Completing a task
- Doing self-care activities
- Eating food
- Celebrating little wins



OXYTOCIN
THE LOVE HORMONE

- Playing with a dog
- Playing with a baby
- Holding hand
- Hugging your family
- Give compliment



SEROTONIN
THE MOOD STABILIZER

- Meditating
- Running
- Sun exposure
- Walk in nature
- Swimming
- Cycling



ENDORPHIN
THE PAIN KILLER

- Laughter exercise
- Essential oils
- Watch a comedy
- Dark chocolate
- Exercising

