



THE RAILWAY EXPRESS #14

A SPECIAL NEWSLETTER TO HELP US STAY CONNECTED

AROUND THE HOUSE

Welcome to Edition 14 of the Railway Express. When we started this community newsletter in early April as a way of staying connected with you whilst we couldn't run our programs and activities, little did we know that we would still be producing them in mid-October! What an incredibly strange year it has turned out to be. Things are certainly looking up for us though and we hope you are all enjoying the new freedoms that we have been afforded. It is delightful to hear the happy sounds of children playing together at the school across the road from the House. Fingers crossed that we will be able to have a summer that resembles some kind of normal.

Staff are enjoying seeing many of you up at the House either walking by to say hello, or dropping off donations and borrowing books. Some people from our groups are now starting to get together in pairs at the House, too. This week **Karen** and **Ellen** from our knitting group met



outside to do some knitting and **Di** and **Helena** from our bike riding group met up to play table tennis. It is also great to see so many people involved in our new cooking program **Food in Common**, with people collecting their recipe packs fortnightly on Wednesdays from the House.

Staff are also enjoying catching up with groups online. **Lisa G** checks in weekly with our knitters and with the cooking and lunch groups via Zoom, whilst **Lisa C** keeps in touch with the creative writing and art groups.

Alison regularly joins the choir and origami group, and a couple of weeks ago she caught up with the bike riders on Zoom, who had organised a fun game which involved guessing the identity of people from old photographs. It was terrific to see what everyone looked like some 40 or more years ago. Di and Richard are pictured below, then and now!



In the school holidays it was great to see some of the local children, who dropped by the House to pick up a showbag! We organised these as a treat for them since we were unable to run any school holiday activities again.



Finally, our Spoonville sign is ready (thanks **Rob** and **Leilani!**) and we are now looking for some spoon people for the village. We would be very grateful if you could make a spoon person – if you don't have a spare wooden spoon we have several at the office that you can come and collect, as well as textas and googly eyes. We want the Railway Spoonville to be the best one this side of the Yarra!

Here's hoping for some good news for Neighbourhood Houses on Sunday and we are able to start planning for the safe return of programs. In the meantime, stay well and keep up the good work. Not long now.

Alison, Lisa C, Lisa G and Jeff

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WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?



John enjoyed getting back on his bike recently, after breaking his leg while riding earlier in the year. Careful, John!

Lisa C. is trying her hand at growing potatoes, and experimented with MAD (Model Air Drying Clay) with her kids. They made some pots, a vase and some Christmas ornaments.





David has been servicing the engine on his boat ready to get back on the water. Make sure you stay within 25km David!



Alison has been honing her baking skills. She spent the Sunday afternoon before school went back making these lunch box treats for her kids.

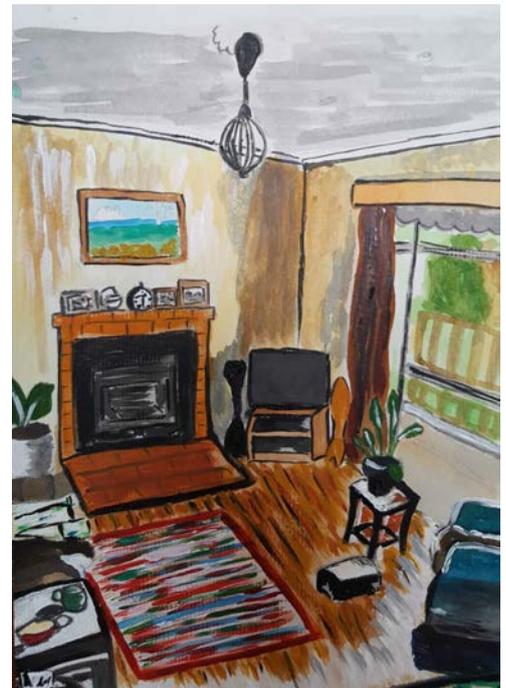
Saphirah and **Lemar** went back to school. Lemar also got a new kitten!





Robert joined our new cooking program and made this delicious pumpkin, haloumi and saltbush salad this week.

Pauline from our art group has been busy creating these beautiful paintings. Damian, the tutor, provides the group with project ideas via their WhatsApp group.



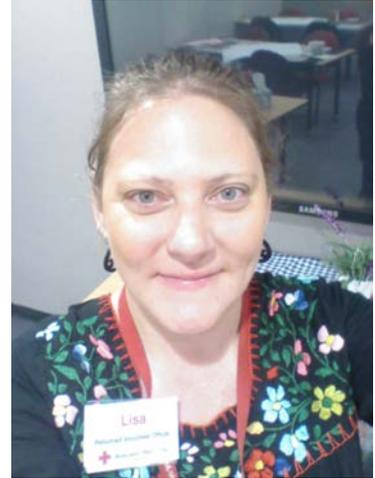


GETTING TO KNOW YOU

*This week we get to know more about **Lisa Giufre** (or Lisa G as we know her!), who has been the Community Engagement Worker at Railway House since late 2018.*

Lisa loves the grass-roots work that she does with people at Railway House and has really enjoyed getting to know those that participate in the community life of the House when she is there on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Lisa's work is largely focussed on the community lunch and cooking programs (in line with her self-confessed obsession with food,... and people!) and is involved in the community garden program, supporting its integration with other aspects of community life and Railway House programs.



Lisa originally hails from Thornbury and grew up in Hurstbridge, with her mum Karen, father Manny (Armando) and sister Sarah. They had a 5-acre block with sheep, chooks and a veggie garden, and she remembers all sorts of adventures had by her and her sister on the block and with the kids next door.

Lisa's dad came to Australia at the age of 6, on a ship from Sicily with his mother and father (her Nonna Severina and Nonno Angelo). They initially settled in Tully where her Nonno worked in the back-breaking sugarcane fields, largely before the use of machinery. After a few years they moved to East Brunswick in Melbourne, and years down the track Armando met Karen at a local dance. She, a softly spoken, caring and gentle woman who grew up in West Heidelberg in a working-class family- was thrust into Sicialian family life not long after!

When Lisa was 16, her family journeyed to Yogyakarta and Bali, Indonesia, for a holiday. There they experienced the wonders of inter-cultural experiences, and for Lisa, despite her being terrified of air travel, this was a life-changing time. Some 10 years later she was to marry a young Bugis man, Subik (the Bugis from South Sulawesi, Indonesia, were traditionally sea-fearers, even pirates, which is where the term 'bogey-man' is thought to originate from). Lisa had previously lived in Indonesia for 7 years. She now has a beautiful 8 year old daughter named Arung, who is said to descend from Bugis royalty! Arung's father works at CERES Environment Park, and he and Lisa co-parent their daughter in Thornbury.

After completing her VCE in 1994, Lisa embarked on a somewhat naïve and misguided quest to 'save the world' after seeing poverty for the first time in Indonesia. She undertook a Degree in Community Development – Asia Pacific stream at Victoria University – which went on to become a pioneering course nationally and internationally. She undertook



fieldwork on the island of Kupang in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention among sex workers, later going on to become a graduate volunteer with Australian Volunteers International in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, working in the same field.

Fluent in Indonesian language after a couple of months, Lisa stayed on in the country for a number of years, working in various public health, child rights, education and protection programs – in both urban centres and very remote islands, including in Buton island after the exodus of displaced people coming from the Ambon conflict in the late 1990s.

Not long after returning to Australia in 2003 to get married, Lisa completed her Masters in International and Community Development at VU. Soon after this, the Asian tsunami hit, on Boxing Day 2004. Lisa then went to Banda Aceh in the western most tip of Indonesia, where hundreds of thousands had died or were missing, and resumed work with Save the Children UK. Lisa's work was initially in emergency communications, and then community-based child protection, coordinating the development of safe play areas across 4 regions, for children affected by the experience. This was one of the most harrowing and emotionally and physically depleting times of her life - being faced with immense human suffering but being fortunate not to have experienced the tsunami. Great sadness and ill health was to affect her for several years to come.

Lisa's 23-year journey in the humanitarian space saw her involvement in various other human rights and community projects that also took her to the Philippines, Cambodia, Timor Leste, West Papua, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan as well as some of the north and western suburbs of Melbourne. She feels very blessed for each and every experience, and every person she has learnt from along the way.

Partly due to lack of training on aspects of self-care and boundaries in community work, Lisa experienced chronic burn out and post-traumatic stress in her late twenties, and spent a long part of her thirties recovering and learning. She was then fortunate enough to be employed by Australian Red Cross in the International Training team, involved in supporting aid workers and volunteers in their pre-departure training and return home debriefing process. Wellbeing of community/humanitarian workers (via self-care and organisational

policy/support) has become a strong focus and a commitment of Lisa's.



Arung and her rooster Snuffle in their food garden in Thornbury.

Nowadays, Lisa draws on approaches to Buddhist ethics and meditation, iyengar yoga, traditional Chinese medicine, friends, family, solitude, cooking, gardening and walking, in addition to her socially focused job at Railway House, and most of all spending time with her beautiful daughter and family, to support her own wellbeing.



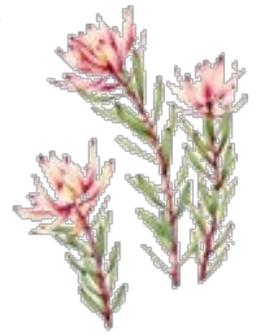
ON WRITING

by Barry Dickins

I have dreamt up a short version of the benefits of writing over not bothering with it and it includes practical tips and encouragement for the joys of creative literature freely available to everybody on the planet. The psychological benefits of going ahead and getting into writing as opposed to not risking anything are to all intents and purposes immense.

The happiness to invent something out of thin air and the groove of descriptions over the unfair boredom of the long hours when you cannot think of a single thing to say; you pick up the pencils and when you do manage to pick them all you what you then do is sharpen them and take a big breath and create a new world or two just for the fun of it!

Whether you write or not is of course entirely up to you but the advantages of speaking out via prose or verse I believe considerably eclipse the remaining silent upon the thoughts and dreams and realisms and fantasies and recollections that hide for good or ill . One of the ways children remember their imaginings and dreams is to employ a daily diary that may include coloured pencil illustrations to decorate their own particular style of writing; I have often witnessed this in some of the schools where I have been invited to teach both writing and cartoon-drawing and I can see no good reason that teenagers and parents don't exploit this chance to express themselves as opposed to remaining ever so silent.



Anything may be written about and that could be a description of strolling through a sunny park or a chance conversation possibly with someone out of Fairy Land or a collection of recollections stretching way back to infancy or velvety dreams before one was born in the first instance.

Dialogue can be delicious and nothing at like realism or naturalism in the same way that the Bronte Sisters created 'Gondal' when they were children which was their imaginary universe peopled with odd characters they simply made up around their kitchen table in order to escape the dreariness and mournful gusts of wind out there on the lonely moors.

You might try and invent a land like Gondal based on real things or unreal things and even write the accounts with a partner similar to the Bronte Sisters back in the 1830s and just as they did you could illustrate these adventures with grey lead pencil or pen and ink. If you felt like it you could fashion the book into sewn pages like Gondal was sewn together so it could be an embroidery as well as a miniature book or it could be simply written into a sketchbook with pens and pencils and when completed be given a reading particularly when the restrictions are lifted.



Some people will explain to you that they have nothing to say but with the aid of memory it could be a dedication to a happening such as a holiday from the ancient past, such as a holiday or an excursion that was especially enjoyable or a memory of Christmas Day or something saddening like losing contact with a childhood companion only to find them by sheerest chance decades later; like a chance meeting or accidental reunion let us say; or it may be an imaginary reunion as a piece of fiction or a rhyming verse that makes up the story of an unexpected meeting.

I have been writing keenly and teaching just as keenly for what feels centuries and all I can guarantee you is that it gives you such a lift that nothing really compares with it, not that I can see at least, and the means to write are so few and easy to come by, like a few sheets of blank paper and a scatter of pencils and somewhere to sit like a kitchen table-top and a good chair that won't fall over on its own.



TOP PICKS



Mary D. wrote in this week to let us know about the Victorian premiere of **Brazen Hussies** and says it will likely feature local feminist activist Zelda D'Aprano, who was a Railway House regular and passed away in 2018.

'BRAZEN HUSSIES shows us how a daring and diverse group of women joined forces to defy the status quo, demand equality and create profound social change - contributing to one of the greatest social movements of the 20th century. The film interweaves freshly uncovered archival footage, personal photographs, memorabilia and lively accounts from the bold women who reignited the feminist movement in Australia, at times at great personal cost.'



It will screen online at 7:15 PM on November 2nd as part of the Humankind Human Rights Art and Film Festival. The film has screened to sold out audiences as part of the Brisbane and Adelaide Film Festivals and Victorian cinema release dates are to be announced pending easing of COVID restrictions. You can watch the trailer [here](#) and book tickets at <https://www.humankindfilmfestival.com/program>



LET'S TALK FOOD

To celebrate the launch of our new cooking program, **Food in Common**, we are sharing the inaugural recipe prepared by the participants. Delicious! Recipe by **Georgia Karavis**.

SPRING LEEK ORZOTTO

Makes 2 large portions or 4 small portions.

Ingredients

- 1 leek
- 250g orzo / risoni pasta
- Large handful rocket
- Large handful of toasted nuts (almonds, hazelnuts)
- 1 lemon (zest + juice)
- 85g blue cheese, goats' cheese or parmesan
- 1 brown onion
- 1 bunch of asparagus
- Small handful of green olives
- 750ml of stock (vegetable or chicken is best - replace 250ml with white wine if you fancy)
- 1-2 tablespoons of oil or butter



Method

1. Chop leek into thin rings about 2/3rds of the way up the stalk, removing the tough outer leaves as you work your way up. Rinse well.
2. Roughly cube brown onion.
3. Heat butter or oil in a deep pan over low-medium heat.
4. Add onions and leek and cook until soft, 5-10 minutes.
5. Zest lemon (about 2 teaspoons worth) and add to pan.
6. Snap the dead ends off your asparagus and cut into 2cm lengths. Set aside.
7. Combine your nuts and olives and roughly chop and set aside.
8. Add pasta to the pot and stir well so that each grain is coated in oil/butter. Cook for 3 or so minutes.
9. Pour over your stock $\frac{1}{2}$ at a time and stir well. Bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer again and cook for a 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally to stop sticking on the bottom.



10. Once your pasta is almost cooked and is looking a little thicker, add asparagus and allow to cook for a further 5 minutes.
11. Crumble in chunks of cheese or grated if you are using a hard cheese. Stir to combine.
12. Check pasta is cooked and if so, turn off the heat, add the chopped almonds and olives.
13. Add rocket and stir through. Serve!

Notes

- Add dried or fresh chilli at the end
- Top with a poached or fried egg for some extra protein
- Serve with poached or roasted chicken breasts or a nice fresh green salad
- Swap out rocket for kale and add in when cooking leeks
- Reheats well in the microwave or oven
- Leaving out the blue cheese until you are ready to serve means you can re-work leftovers into a minestrone style soup by adding more stock, a can of tomatoes and any other vegetables you have that need using. Just add the cooked orzo for the last 5 minutes so it doesn't turn mushy.



LOCKDOWN LAUGHS



PET COMPETITION - RESULTS



Congratulations to all of our adorable winners!
We will be in touch with your humans about when and how to collect your prizes.



Dog with the Cutest Face – Rosie



Cat with the Cutest Face – Kiki



Cuddliest Pet - Sammy & Molly



Most Athletic Pet – Wilson



Most Beautiful Eyes – Casper



Best Ears – Chanel



*Pet with Closest Resemblance to Owner
Jasper (and Fiona)*



Best-dressed Pet – Rusty



AND FINALLY...

Food banks are reporting record demand as many people are doing it tougher than usual due to COVID. Railway House is a drop-off point for the Salvation Army Asylum Seeker Support Service, and we also maintain a small emergency pantry for locals who need a helping hand from time to time.

If you'd like to donate to either of these initiatives, why not pop a few extra non-perishable food items in your trolley next time you are shopping? You can leave donations for the Asylum Seeker Support Service in the black tub outside of the office between 10:00 and 2:00, or hand donations for the Emergency Pantry to office staff.



To view a list of suggested items for donation, please visit our website at:
<http://railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au/giving-back/food-donations/>

