



THE RAILWAY EXPRESS

TERM 1, 2024

AROUND THE HOUSE

Welcome to the first edition of our Railway Express newsletter for 2024. It feels like no time at all since we were settling back into things after the summer holiday break, and here we are in the midst of autumn and about to finish Term One! It has been a busy and delightful term, with lots of new people joining our community and a happy, harmonious atmosphere about the place. It's great to see the many friendships and connections made here.

In addition to our weekly schedule of programs and activities, we had several special events this term, including a "Gardening in Summer" workshop run by Yarra Council (the facilitators were very impressed with our garden, by the way!). We also enjoyed a special lunch to celebrate Cultural Diversity week (some of Lisa G's beautiful photos below) and held our autumn Makers' Market last weekend. Thanks to everyone who contributed and came along to these lovely community events, and a special shout out to Craig King for the marvellous job he did organising the plant stall!





We also had two bus trips this term. Thanks to a grant from Metro Trains, bus trip participants enjoyed an outing to Cruden Farm in February, and in March they took the iconic ferry ride from Queenscliff to Sorrento. We ran two “Repair” sessions this term, our wonderful volunteer fixers saving many kilos of items from landfill. We'll be holding these sessions on the second Sunday of every month so be sure to book in your items (bookings open two weeks prior to each session). We also launched our community Compost Club this term. This program not only provides locals with the opportunity to dispose of their food waste in a way that has less impact on the planet, but also helps create compost for our community garden. If you'd like to be involved, please contact Alison.

A heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated to help fund driving lessons for two members of our community. We raised well over our target and will use the excess to fund some lessons for another two people in our community. We are pleased to report that Ibrahim is almost ready to take his driving test - scheduled for next month! Fingers crossed for him.



Andrew & Jasper, our inaugural Compost Club Members

We are looking forward to Term Two, when we'll be having a special morning tea to mark Intergenerational Week, and a special lunch to celebrate our volunteers during National Volunteer Week. We also have a couple of new programs in the pipeline - check out the details later in this newsletter and get in touch if you are interested!

Don't forget, we welcome your input into our newsletters! Please feel free to send in your favourite recipes, poems, classified ads, stories, photos, or anything else that you think may be of interest. Don't be shy, we would love to receive your contributions!

Happy Easter and Eid Mubarak to all those celebrating.

Alison



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Genevieve Evin

*The lovely **Genevieve Evin** attends our Tai Chi and Art programs and is a volunteer tutor for our two French Conversation groups!*

I was born in the North-East of France, in Nancy, the capital of the Lorraine region. My parents had moved there to start a new life after the war, after five years of occupation, fear, and deprivations that had marred their teenage years. They pushed me and my younger brother to do better than themselves, and to achieve our full potential. On top of my academic studies, I learned music and ballet.

I went to university, and I was awarded a Doctorate degree in Chemistry, which was rare at the time for a young woman in a male-dominated field. This was the first step of my career in medical research, which led me to work in laboratories in Boston (USA) and in Paris, where I met an Australian researcher who became my husband. We settled in Melbourne 38 years ago, and I joined the University of Melbourne to do research on Alzheimer's disease, to design and to test drug candidates in laboratory models. I led a small research group, trying to juggle my work and raising two children. We travelled a lot, to attend conferences overseas, and to remain in contact with my family in France. Research is a never-ending job, progress is slow, and the most rewarding was to see my students graduate and pursue their own career. My career ended abruptly when my funding was not renewed. This was a difficult time, as my parents had passed away, my children had left the family nest, and all my social contacts were tied to the work I had left. I took me a while to bounce back. I did the whole genealogy of the family, and a bit of gardening too, but I desperately needed new social contacts.



Genevieve & her son Duncan

One day, I pushed the door of the Railway House to enquire about programs on offer. I joined the Tai-Chi class to improve my balance, which turned out to be successful. I tried the art class to learn new skills, although I had bad memories from doing art at primary school. I found it challenging at first, but after persisting it became fulfilling. In both classes and in general at Railway House, everyone was welcoming, friendly, and non-competitive, a totally new environment for me!

When a survey indicated a demand for learning French or doing French conversation at the Railway House, I was happy to volunteer and bring my contribution to the community. It was challenging, as I had never taught French before and I needed to do some research and find topics of discussion. Quickly, a friendly and enthusiastic group of people formed and gathered every week to refresh memories of their youth, to learn about French culture, and to socialise around a cup of coffee and pastries. My new challenge today is to run a class for beginners, for people who have never learned French before. My goal is to make learning French an enjoyable social activity!

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

*Many of the members of our RH community garden have other gardening interests in the local community. Here **Jane Miller** tells us a bit about why she loves community gardening and discusses some of the other gardening projects she's involved with.*

As friends at RH know I am a very keen if not particularly expert gardener. I look forward to our Thursday morning gardening group and find gardening with others very relaxing. I am also lucky enough to have a lane garden as the lane behind my house is not suitable for traffic. We have a small garden registered with Council. I garden there very modestly with 2-3 others. We have constant churn as most of the houses are rented and people move on. But a couple of us keep the garden going.

I feel that with climate change upon us it's increasingly important to green our neighbourhoods but also encourage other people to understand plants and their role in creating healthy cities. Of course, a community garden also gives a chance to reduce food miles on food such as herbs. How many people realise that the herbs we buy in supermarkets wrapped in plastic have often been grown in green houses which aren't environmentally friendly and trucked from interstate.

As if that isn't enough for one senior citizen, in the last few years I've been involved with a fabulous gardening group managed by the Princes Hill Community Centre which operates in the Melbourne General Cemetery which has suffered from years of neglect and excessive spraying with herbicides. While the cemetery managers have no significant plans to plant



Jane with Costa Georgiadis

canopy trees, they have planted a very large and beautiful section of indigenous grasses at the northern end. This 'Project Cultivate' was opened by Costa from Gardening Australia. Of course, I had to have my photo taken with him as I am a huge fan of GA. If anyone is interested, we can be found there from 10-12 on the fourth Friday of every month.



WRITERS' CORNER

The Cat in the House

By Carolyn Ilsley

There's a cat in the house
Watch out little mouse!
It will tease you
And please you -
And ultimately seize you.

Sweet Ava Mary loves Nan's cat
She will cuddle and squeeze it
And luxuriously please it –
With tidbits for tea
(No surprise to me!)

But Pussy may scratch... or bite
(Pointy teeth oh so white)
Just a playful nip
On one fingertip

So remember the mouse
That lives in the house
Watch out for that kitty
Who's ever so pretty

That's my advice
'bout dear little mice
Deserving of pity
From that dangerous darling...
The household kitty

(A poem for Ava from her Aunty Carolyn)





Alone Australia

Alone, if you're not familiar with it, is a riveting competition in which participants must survive as long as possible in the wilderness, bringing with them just 10 items. There is no camera crew and no narrator; instead, participants are given camera equipment with which to self-document their experiences – the raw footage is then used to create the show.

Alone is a fascinating study into the human condition - attempting to live in the wild for as long as possible, the contestants must find food, build shelters, and endure deep isolation, physical deprivation, and psychological stress. Despite this, it can be oddly relaxing to watch due to its utter simplicity and the austere beauty of the locations – though when participants come face-to-face with predators or come a cropper while chopping wood, it can be terrifying.



Alone has been running in various countries since 2015 in remote locales ranging from Vancouver Island to Patagonia to the Arctic; the current season of *Alone Australia* is located on the stunning South Island New Zealand.

I highly recommend this show! ☆☆☆☆☆

***Alone Australia* airs on Tuesdays 7:30 PM on SBS or you can stream all episodes on SBS On Demand**



LET'S TALK FOOD

This term, our Food in Common group enjoyed three facilitated cooking sessions in which some delicious dishes were prepared!

Merric, a recent Bachelor of Nutrition Science graduate and friend of Railway House, was a guest cook for two sessions in which the group prepared a number of delicious dishes ranging from stuffed capsicums to cauliflower curry to sweet potato pakoras.

Our placement student from last year, Deniz, also cooked with the group, and made lamb kofte, lentil soup and bulgur pilaf.

His lentil soup was so simple and sublimely delicious, we had to share it!



INGREDIENTS (Serves 4 – 6)

Olive oil or butter
1 onion, diced
1 potato, peeled and diced
1 carrot, peeled and diced
2 C dried red lentils
Salt and pepper
Chilli of your choice (dried or fresh – Aleppo is traditional)



METHOD

1. In a medium cooking pot, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil or butter (or a combination) over medium-high heat.
2. Add the onion, carrot and potato, season with salt, and cook, stirring occasionally until the vegetables have softened (about 5 to 7 minutes).
3. Add the lentils and enough water to cover.
4. Allow the soup to come to a rolling boil for 4 to 5 minutes, then lower the heat and cover the pot with a lid, leaving a small gap.
5. Let the soup simmer on the lowest heat setting for about 15 to 20 minutes or until the lentils and the vegetables are completely tender. (Check occasionally and give the soup a stir as needed. If it is getting too thick, add a little bit more water).
6. Remove the pot from the heat and carefully blend the soup using an immersion blender until smooth and creamy. (Alternatively, cool slightly and transfer the soup to a standard blender. Blend in batches until all of the soup is smooth.)
7. To finish, in a small skillet, warm about 3 tablespoons olive oil or butter over medium heat. Add minced fresh or dried chilli until fragrant. Remove from the heat and pour the warmed oil or butter all over the soup.
8. Serve with lemon wedges on the side.

THE THINGS YOU FIND OUT ABOUT PEOPLE!

*A little bird told Alison that **Nick Jans**, a member of the Railway Ramblers choir, used to be in a band during his days as an army cadet.*

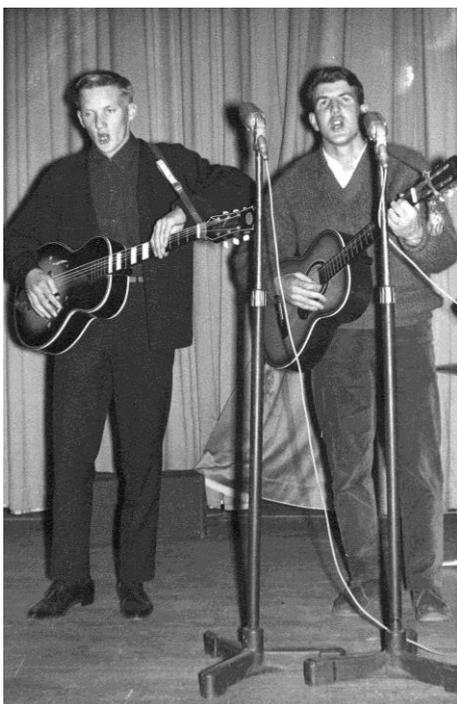
More than half a lifetime ago, during my time as a cadet at the Royal Military College, I was a member of a band. A group of young teenage cadets strumming on guitars, in imitation to the prominent “folk music” groups of the early 1960s era, such as Peter, Paul & Mary, Joan Baez and The Kingston Trio. But we didn’t take ourselves too seriously: our fundamental motive was to have fun and to be invited to parties. We called ourselves “The Hoverers”.

We had to be rather circumspect in our repertoire. A prominent theme in the folk genre of that era was the anti-war music relating to the war in Vietnam, and the College authorities would have frowned upon our following this trend. So we just stuck to the good old good ones.



Nick Jans

Alas, my band-member days ended on graduation day: a young officer’s career didn’t provide much opportunity for hovering. But what fun it was to hover! And it was probably one of the factors that kept me sufficiently motivated to see out my four years at Duntroon.





CLASSIFIEDS

Wanted

We are on the lookout for a very special person who can volunteer for 1.5 hours per week on a Tuesday afternoon, from 4.45pm to 6.15pm. The role involves taking a younger member of our community to her dance class in Brunswick and returning her back to her home in Princes Hill. She is a delightful and polite 10-year-old with good conversational skills, and you will certainly enjoy spending time with her!

You will need a police check, working with children check (we can help you apply for these) and drivers' licence for this role. Please contact Alison at manager@railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au to find out more.

Expressions of Interest Sought

Creative Writing Class

This Creative Writing class will be held on Tuesday afternoons from 1.30pm till 3pm and will be run by Princes Hill local Christine Croyden, playwright, author and lyricist. You will develop the craft of writing for theatre or dramatize your own story, building the ability to use structure, style and narrative and exploring the ways in which character and dialogue support ideas. You will identify your voice and create original work that resonates with an audience.



Chair Pilates

Are interested in Pilates but find it difficult to get down on the floor? If, so you might be interested in trying Chair Pilates! Pilates is great for total body conditioning, increasing core stability, correcting muscle imbalances, improving posture, and promoting functional movement, coordination, and balance. This class will take place on either Fridays at 11am or on Mondays at 12pm and will be facilitated by our wonderful Pilates instructor Cally.

Free Therapy

Do you think you would benefit from a walk and talk? **Walking and talking** is therapeutic and can be as in-depth or light-hearted as you require. Caterina, a qualified counsellor from MindSense, has offered to run walk and talk sessions next term. You'll get some exercise and get things off your chest at the same time, and perhaps stop for a coffee along the way. Caterina has also offered to run free group sessions in **Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)**. This is a simple, fun, non-invasive, and effective tool for releasing stress and cortisol from the body and it can even help with chronic pain. There's plenty of scientific research to back its efficacy - read about here:

<https://www.bodyandsoul.com.au/health/mental-health/what-is-psychological-acupuncture-and-how-could-it-help-you/news-story/4dfc1c55c927aa0de0b0be40d448c1f8>. Why not give it a try?

If you are interested in any of the above new programs, please contact the office at admin@railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au

AND FINALLY...



 **BICYCLE NETWORK**

E-bike Expo

Brunswick Velodrome

Abrahams Reserve, Brunswick East
Sunday 7 April, 2024
11am-3pm

- **Test ride a range of e-bikes**
- **Talk directly to e-bike experts**
- **Community sausage sizzle**
- **Coffee and refreshments**
- **Guest speakers**
- **DJs**



Pearson Clinical is looking for people to take part in a study on cognition, memory, and daily living skills!

RESEARCH STUDY!

We are looking for people who:

- are aged 16 to 90 years old
- have English as their primary language

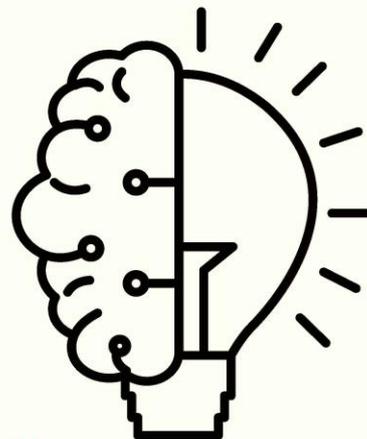
Participation involves:

- Three assessment sessions:
 - Session 1 takes 2 to 3.5 hours
 - Session 2 takes 1 to 2 hours
 - Session 3 takes 30 minutes
- You will do problem-solving and memory tasks, puzzles, and answer knowledge questions.
- You will do practical tasks such as telling time and counting money.
- We will connect you with a researcher in your area to conduct the study sessions.

As a thank you, each participant receives two \$100 gift cards for completing sessions 1 and 2, and a \$50 gift card for completing session 3.

Participation in this study is not considered treatment. You will not receive any results or feedback.

To find out more & register, go to:
www.PearsonClinical.com.au/Participant



For questions, please contact: research@pearson.com.au

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