



THE COBURG MEDDLER

THE RICHTER SCALE EDITION

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ROBERT RICHTER, QC ENTERS ELECTORAL FRAUD ARENA

If Moreland's electoral fraud fiasco wasn't dramatic enough, Robert Richter, QC has been added to the mix.

To recap, in November 2020, the Moreland Council election results were brought into disrepute due to allegations of electoral fraud in the North-West ward. Irregularities were detected when a number of voters complained that they

had not received their ballot papers. It was later alleged that a candidate had offered \$500 for every 50 ballot papers taken from resident mailboxes in the area.

STORY CONTINUED PAGE 3

EARTHQUAKE IN COBURG (AND ELSEWHERE)

On 22 September, at approximately 9:15am, the people of Coburg were rattled by a magnitude 5.8 earthquake. Coburg lost power in most of the suburb, revealing a substandard infrastructure. It was soon circulated that Preston was also struck by power outages, and

the long-standing war between the two neighbouring suburbs abated for the day.

One resident reports what it was like to be on the famous Harding St suspension bridge spanning the divide between Coburg and Preston: "I crossed the suspension bridge as usual

at 9.15am to get my morning coffee at Joe's garden. When I got to Joe's they were all banging on about an earthquake or something. I told them I hadn't noticed anything unusual".

STORY NOT CONTINUED

----- COBURG NEWS UPDATES -----

COBURG NORTH FLOODS

The intersection of Kent Rd, Rollo St and Sussex St in Coburg North were under water in early October.

Sewerage contaminated the flood waters, and residents were told to avoid splashing about.

**WHY DOES THE LXP HATE TREES SO MUCH?**

The swathe of saplings that have not survived their re-homing along the Upfield corridor has been of concern to locals for months now. Of the 1,500 saplings planted along the revamped rail corridor, over 100 have died (but estimates of up to 300 have been reported). Since locals began to report and question the LXP over the dead trees, some of the trees have been removed, and an even smaller number have been replaced with new saplings. The Council has suggested poor soil drainage and inadequate storage of the trees on site prior to planting as an explanation, while many locals are also suspecting that there had been no attempts to water the trees after they were planted.

The LXP is obligated to continue maintenance of the trees and other plants until the project is officially handed over

to the Council, in roughly 2 years. It seems they need some reminding of this.

KANGAROO ON NICHOLSON ST

On 23 September, at about 7:45am, a young kangaroo was seen thumping down Nich-

olson Street, Coburg. Onlookers were distressed by the confused roo darting between traffic, narrowly avoiding cars. Tragically, the roo ended up being killed in traffic along Bell St.

It is highly unusual and dangerous for kangaroos to venture into Coburg. The explanation for the strange event could lie in Melbourne's curfew; with quieter roads than usual between 9pm-5am, wildlife could be mistaken about the safety of exploring beyond their usual boundaries.

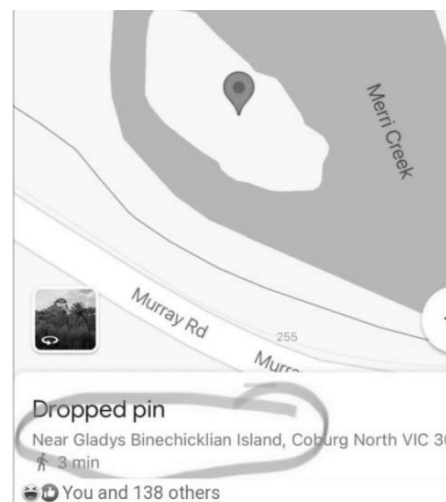
If you come across a roo that is unsafe, call Wildlife Victoria and the Victorian Police as soon as possible.

BIN CHICKEN ISLAND RENAMED

In late September, Bin Chicken Island, located in the Coburg Lake area, was renamed Gladys Binechicklian Island.

The decision to rename the island was reversed after it was discovered that the NSW

government funded the name change. This would have been fine, if not for it later coming to light that Mr Maguire had made his home there among the shrubbery.

**COBURG TABLE TENNIS TABLE**

Many people may remember the review of Brunswick's new table tennis table at Bulleke-bek Park. Our concern was that the table faced east to west, blinding sunset players and causing totally unfair advantages.

Coburg's new table tennis table under the upfield line manages to avoid this design flaw, however it introduces another. It is close enough to the bike path that any ambitious lunges or aggressive power shots may cause a bicycle pile up.



In response to these concerns, the VEC made an application to VCAT within its strict 14 day time frame – as per the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) – to contest the election results. Under this Act, VCAT has broad powers to resolve the matter in dispute, including declaring an election void or imposing financial penalties.

Incredibly, despite the VCAT matter being initiated in November 2020, the matter is still ongoing.

The VEC's initial submission to VCAT was that the North-West ward results should be invalidated due to the suspected fraudulent ballot papers that were detected when counting was being undertaken. 17 candidates in the election have also been listed as additional parties to the proceedings.

The current complicating factor is that a criminal investigation is being conducted parallel to the VCAT matter. As such, the full-extent of the alleged fraud is largely unknown as the suspected fraudulent ballot papers are being held by Victoria Police.

The VEC has recently taken a backstep from its initial position, believing that, based on the evidence available, the fraud would not have been substantial enough to sway the results of the election.

On the other hand, North-West ward Councillors, Cnr Angelica Panopoulos, Cnr Helen Davidson and Cnr Oscar Yildiz have engaged barristers to bolster the position that an appropriate decision should still be arrived at by VCAT, and that the decision should be based on

the full extent of available evidence. Submissions were made on this point at the latest hearing in August, with barristers for the aforementioned Councillors requesting that VCAT order Victoria Police to show evidence of the 83 suspect ballot papers.

Making submissions against this position is Cnr Milad El-Halabi, who has recently engaged Robert Richter. Richter is a high-profile, extremely expensive and oft-times controversial figure in the Australian legal landscape, well-known for his defence of Cardinal George Pell and most recently his defence of Witness K.

Richter argued at the August hearing that an order requesting those ballot papers be presented as evidence should not be granted, as any findings made by VCAT – which applies civil standards to its findings ('on the balance of probabilities') rather than criminal standards ('beyond reasonable doubt') – may jeopardise the ongoing criminal hearing.

In response to this concern are arguments about the sanctity of democracy. What is more in the public interest: one person facing custody, or a municipality having a democratically elected council? Given the high stakes of this electoral scandal (and Richter's daily costs) we would imagine everyone is keen to have this over and done with.

By SAS & BB

COUNCIL SILENCES QUESTIONS ABOUT ELECTORAL FRAUD

At the September Moreland Council meeting, moderators from the Council took down the live stream video which captured local extraterrestrials attempting to ask a (unapproved) question in public question time about the alleged electoral fraud. The locals were muted and removed from the meeting before completing their question.

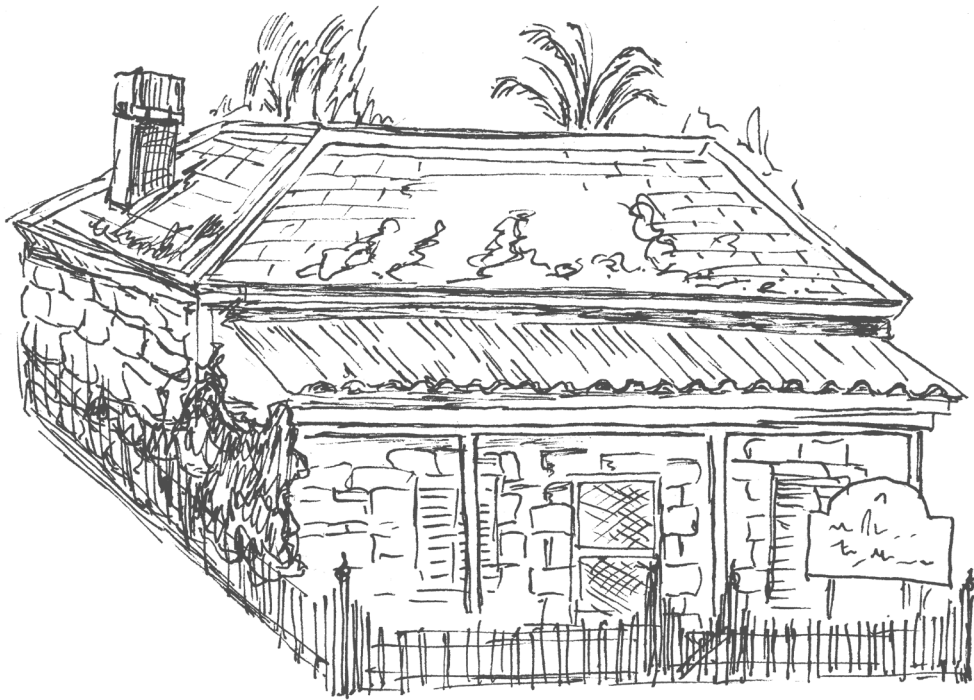
After the meeting, Council edited the footage to delete any evidence of the question

being asked. In the process of replacing the live stream video with the new, edited video, Moreland Council deleted all of the public's comments from the entire night. When questioned, moderators on the facebook page claimed that they edited out any content that was:

"...defamatory, indecent, offensive, profane, discriminatory, misleading, unlawful or threatening content on our Facebook page."

The Council is clearly concerned about any rhetoric around the allegations, which does nothing to allay the concerns of locals who are interested in knowing about steps that are being taken to ensure that democracy is being upheld.

By SAS & BB



BLUESTONE COTTAGE UNDER THREAT

The fate of the Coburg Historical Society's ('CHS') museum and headquarters, the 1860s bluestone cottage complex, remains uncertain amid the proposed sell-off of the partially vacant block on which it stands. Although the cottage itself has a heritage listing, there is a concern that the CHS would get the boot if the building were to be used by the private company, Coburg Health Hub, for part of its planned health precinct.

CHS have been caretakers of the building since the 1980s. On top of general upkeep, the group have used the space to display the history of the stone cottage itself, which was built by Irish immigrant and Pentridge Prison warder James Smith, after his more flammable wooden cottage was burnt down. He purportedly believed his new stone house to be fire-proof.

Upon hearing news of the proposed sale of land, CHS created a petition which they brought to Moreland Council in August. Councillors voted (though not unanimously) to start a consultation process for the sell-off, with The Greens stating that their intention in the consultation process is to maintain ownership of the piece of land that the cottage is on.

According to the Council, Coburg Health Hub have 'confirmed support' for allowing CHS

to maintain their position in the cottage, however it is unclear how that would look. In theory, CHS could become tenants of the Coburg Health Hub, which would mean less security in their position. Many are instead pushing for the section of land that the cottage is on to be excised from the sale of the land.

The plans for the health precinct include a range of clinics, both private and bulk-billed, as well as a childcare centre and private hospital.

Moreland Council claim to have ideally wanted a public hospital for the site, but say the State Government targets for the area would not have supported that decision, and that this was the next best thing in their view. Some locals argue however that a health hub is unnecessary given there are multiple health clinics, both public and private, in the area. This argument raises broader concerns about the Council selling public land where there is little, if any, public benefit.

Interestingly, Mayor Annalivia Carli Hanan has declared a conflict of interest and will not be able to vote on the sale. A final decision on the sale of the land is set to be made later this year in November.

By SAS & BB

FLAVOURS OF COBURG

COBURGER & CO

Coburger, I know your face, I know it well. Many an evening have I debated with my wife as to what cuisine shall we be 'indulging' in this 'week'. Inevitably I give the answer that is always at the front of my mind: *Burgs*.

Sometimes we don't order burgers, sometimes we do, and when we do it's almost always Coburger...Or Major Tom's (but that's a story for another day). The reason I introduce Coburger & Co like this is to establish to the audience that I really like Coburger & Co.

However, I've always known Coburger as the place to go to order what I call their 'face slammers'. You know the type, no matter how wide you unhinge your jaw you only end up slamming your face into the side of the burger and closing your mouth, praying that you come away with enough to begin your strategic consumption.

For this review I decided to approach my order differently, so I wasn't giving the classic review of the 'Makin' Bacon Duplex Burger' and whatever their chicken/veg equivalent is, instead I ordered their Coburger with Cheese. No frills, no double ups, just their baseline burger (with onion rings). My theory being, you don't buy a house* with shoddy foundations and you don't buy a maxed-out burger without eating their cheeseburger.**

Their 'Coburger with Cheese' is bloody good. From the first bite you can tell that this patty is handmade and delicious. If I'm wrong, and a machine made this, then we need more of these loving and caring machines in this world. That's a patty I can set my watch to, and the time would be juicy, well-seasoned and...girthy.

The rest of the burger ingredients act as the grand stage for the burger patty to perform. The lettuce brings a crunch, the unspecified cheese glues the brioche patty and lettuce together. The mustard, ketchup and 'house sauce' combine to create a punchy topping that is not so runny so as to make a mess on your hands and shirt that you JUST cleaned, but runny enough to warrant the last bite of your burger also acting as a mop.

The onion rings were also on point. They're so crispy that it's like you're chowing down on the essence of crunch. I ordered the aioli to go alongside, which was yet another great choice on my part. Aioli is great. I don't know what it is, but it's great.

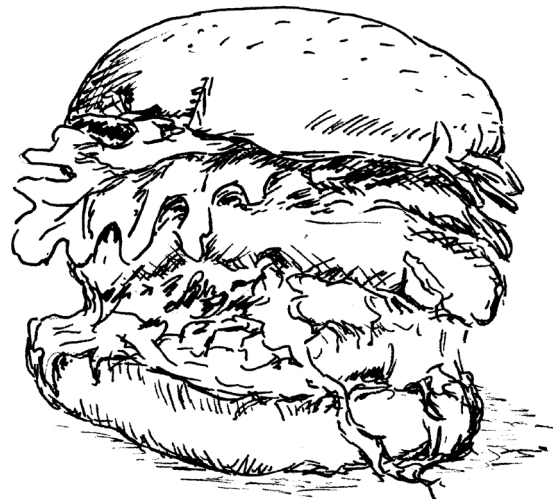
In conclusion, if I had to order from Coburger again I'd ask for any burger other than the Coburger with Cheese, for I have supped upon their foundations and am now prepared to eat the house.

By Matthew Boehm

**I've never bought a house*

***Always buy the burger that looks to kill you financially and in a cardiovascular sense.*

Coburger & Co
67 Moreland Rd, Coburg
9939 5178



MALL-CONTENTS

PINK EMBER STUDIO

Pink Ember Studio is a queer-run co-operative, creating spaces for artists to make and sell work and be part of a community. Aoife Billings, one of the co-founders, set aside some time to talk to the Coburg Meddler.

CM: How did Pink Ember come about?

AB: We were all in a studio together in Brunswick. We knew of each other through that. But then one fateful day me and Aaron [Billings] were on the tram and started talking to Frances [Cannon] about our plans to get our own studio space. Frances got really enthusiastic and said we should all set up a queer-studio space. We put a call out on social media for people to get involved and Gemma [Flack], who Aaron knew, absolute angel, came onboard. Setting up a safe-space for us all was a really incredible experience.

When you all get excited about something, things start to happen. We learnt a lot very quickly. I think we went in fairly naively in the sense that we didn't have the details worked out. It started as a studio space and a place to do workshops, as that was mine and Aaron's main business before starting the space, but then we noticed that we had a lot of foot traffic, so we decided to turn it into a shop as well.

We've also received a lot of support from Arts Moreland. They're a group of people who care about art and supporting local artists. So, when we started up they were very keen to help us out with grants and any questions we had.

CM: When you received grants from Arts Moreland, were there any restraints on your creative projects?

AB: No, they've been very supportive. We haven't felt censored or like we need to run anything past them. I would say that we have a wholesome vibe, anyway. Lots of wholesome queers gravitate towards our space.

CM: How have you found Coburg? Are you getting much support from the locals?

AB: The majority of people coming into the store are locals. We get a lot of people saying that they are really excited to have us here. I think it's be-

cause the building we're in was vacant for a long time.

I mean, we're aware that there were a couple of complaints about paintings depicting naked bodies that have been made, but other than that things have been fine.

I can't describe how much I love Coburg. It's not like other suburbs I've spent time in. You can tell that people here really value community. Along O'Hea St, you can see all of the baskets of food that people are leaving out for others, and the people sitting in their front yard are always keen to wave and smile. I love the community here.

CM: How have you been weathering the pandemic?

AB: It's been challenging, like it has been for everyone. But Arts Moreland has been really supportive. We were also lucky, because our landlord halved the rent during the last lockdown, which we passed on to the artists renting space.

This lockdown has been a bit harder and we haven't been able to get much rent relief, so we've had to ask for some donations from the community, and people have been very supportive.

CM: Anything you'd like the readers to know about?

AB: Get involved! We prioritise queer, POC, locals by offering for them to rent monthly studio spaces or run workshops. We're really glad that a lot of the artists that are in the space are locals.



CERAMICS CLASSES AT PINK EMBER

Outside of lockdown, Pink Ember regularly runs workshops. In the past, they've put on things like embroidery and animation classes (and one Halloween, they ran a spooky craft night).

Currently, Aoife Billings is running online ceramics classes for beginners. She will help you make a teacup, teach you painting techniques, and assist you with firing and glazing if you're unable to drop your teacup off to her in Coburg.

Prices for the classes include a material pack, postage fees, firing and glazing.

Support your local artists and make yourself a good little cup.

Book online at <https://aoifebillings.com/> or through <https://www.pinkemberstudio.com/>



Vase by Aoife Billings

MEDDLING MARY

Is it ethical to compliment a friend solely to make her or him happy when it is not really what one thinks. Should we always tell exactly what is on our mind or is it better to keep our thoughts to ourselves to maintain friendships.

Regards

Daisy Sunflower

Good morning dear readers,

Meddling Mary here with some piping hot advice fresh out of the oven. Our first ever question comes from valued reader Daisy Sunflower! Daisy has written in with an excellent two-parter question about the ethics of an empty compliment and if the truth is always the best medicine.

Specifically, Daisy asks if it is ethical to compliment a friend even if it is not how you really feel. Before deciding if it is ethical, let us talk about if it is necessary. Why are you feeling the need to offer a compliment that you do not mean? This author has certainly tried to fill dead air or ease an awkward encounter with a less than sincere 'love your top, where did you get it?' (and has never lost a wink of sleep about it). If you are feeling pressure to compliment your friends as a form of social lubricant, choosing something you truly value about them is better than making something up. But is it ethical? Strictly speaking, dishonesty amongst friends (unlike thieves) is

best avoided wherever possible. A genuine 'you are really creative' is better than a hollow 'your macaroni art belongs in the national gallery'.

Turning our attention to part two of your question; should we say what is on our mind or zip our lips for the sake of relationships? This is one of those very simple and very complicated features of relationships. We are faced with two competing imperatives, honesty and preserving people's feelings. When deciding whether to say what you think, it is useful to ask three questions: is this kind? is this true? is this necessary? If what you have to say is neither kind nor true, keep it to yourself. The same applies to comments that are true, but neither kind nor necessary. Where things get more difficult is if it is necessary to say something true even if it is not kind. In these instances, be brave and say what is necessary. This is especially true if what you need to say is about your wellbeing or the wellbeing of others. Open and honest communication can strengthen your relationships, and, like most things, it gets easier with practice.

That being said, if your friend goes out of their way to cook you a dinner, smile and tell them it is delicious even if it is crap. Immanuel Kant can shove it.

MM

A TALE OF TWO CITIES: And a Council of Gasbaggers

You may remember that Moreland City Council proudly declared a climate emergency in 2018 - one of the first Victorian Councils to do so. In their fossil fuel divestment strategy plan they state:

*"Moreland City Council prides itself on being regarded as a leader and innovator in driving the transformation towards a sustainable society, and will continue to implement creative and innovative solutions to improve the sustainability performance of its operations including reducing carbon emissions associated with its own operations and using its influence to encourage others to take action."**

You might therefore be confused to learn that the Council is considering installing new gas heating for its swimming pools. It did so at Oak Park, and now appears to be considering it for Fawkner and Brunswick pools. Just to remind us (or maybe just our council), natural gas is made up of mostly methane, and burning it creates Co2. Moving all Moreland leisure centre sites off gas would reduce the Council carbon footprint by as much as 27 per cent.

Moreland Council has a policy of being carbon neutral, a feat achieved financially, meaning that all emissions by Council Operations at the end of each year are added up and carbon offset credits are purchased. If emissions are reduced, fewer offset credits need to be purchased, a saving to Council and ratepayers. Currently Moreland's four aquatic centres are responsible for 89 per cent of the Council's gas consumption, with Brunswick Baths being the worst at (31 per

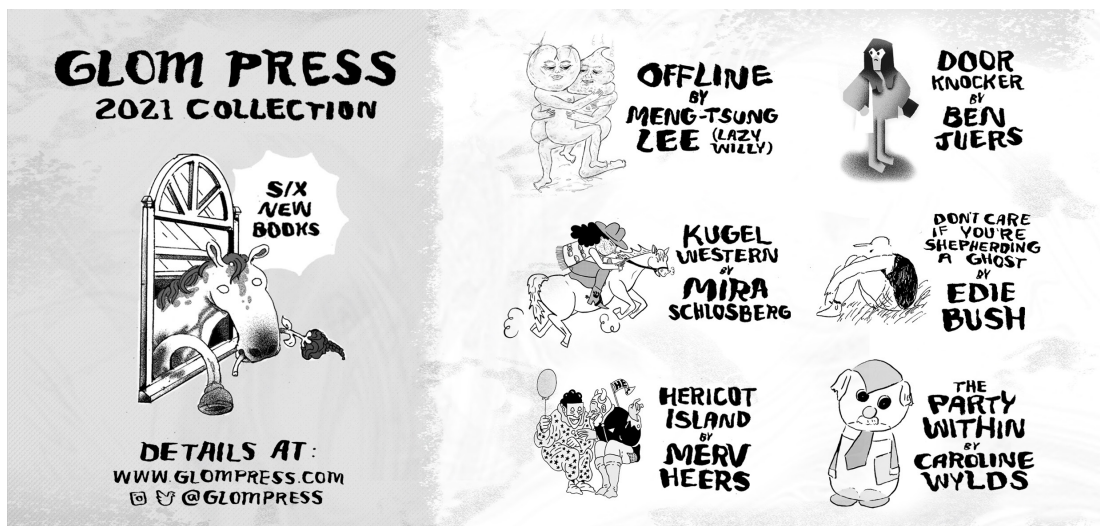
cent), followed by Oak Park (24 per cent); Fawkner (19 per cent); and Coburg Leisure Centre (15 per cent).

For a council that sees itself as climate conscious, it is lagging both nationally and internationally. In Victoria alone, there are 4 leisure centres about to be demolished and rebuilt without any gas. They are: St Albans Leisure Centre (Brimbank); Carnegie Swim Centre (Glen Eira); Northcote Aquatic Centre (Darebin); and Kensington Aquatic Centre (City of Melbourne). An enquiry to Brimbank Council on the energy systems in the rebuild of the St Albans Leisure Centre elicited the following response from Neil Whiteside, the Director of Infrastructure and City Services:

"Council officers advise that the new Health and Wellbeing Hub has been designed to include the use of electric pumps. The use of electric pumps will allow the facility to deploy a 100 per cent renewable energy powered whole of facility heating and cooling system."

It's well known the majority of people want action on climate change and that means stopping the use of fossil fuels. So, you could be forgiven for wondering why gas is even being considered.

By Ian Mack



WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Updates on local activism



Poster design: Nicki Minus

IMARC

The International Mining and Resources Conference (IMARC) is an annual event held in Melbourne whereby representatives and decision-makers in the mining sector come together to, among other buzz-wordy things, make deals. In 2019, IMARC boasted that over \$46 million in business increased as a direct result of the conference, and \$100.3 million additional investments were made in the mining industry.

Every year, activists from various backgrounds have united to protest IMARC under the banner of Blockade IMARC. The group holds itself out as fighting against extractivism with a non-violent approach, including through blockades and protest.

IMARC was meant to take place on 22 - 24 October 2021, but due to COVID-19 it has been delayed until 31 January - 2 February 2022.

Blockade IMARC is using this time to discuss how to effectively bring attention to the climate justice reasons for protesting the conference.

Contact them through their website: <https://blockadeimarc.com/> to get involved.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION FRIDAYS IN COBURG - DRIVERS NEEDED

The Muslim Women's Council of Victoria have moved to 19 Harding St, Coburg (the Coburg Bowls club). The small group is using the space to cook hot meals for needy families every Friday. They currently supply a variety of healthy meals to over 200 households in the area.

One of the biggest challenges the group is facing is adequate cooking facilities. Whilst they have a roof over their head, they only have a couple of woefully inadequate single-burner portable gas stoves to achieve their task of providing assistance.

The group itself has been operating a food and general goods distribution centre since COVID-19 started, but they have only just moved to Coburg. Afshan, one of the organisers and volunteers, says that the group helps a broad range of needy people; refugees, families who are struggling, people with disabilities who need extra help.

Afshan said that another excellent way to help the centre is by offering to deliver the meals. Drivers who are free on Fridays and are looking for a way to help the community are encouraged to get in contact with the group.

You can also join the group on facebook to see what items they currently need.

DRIVERS NEEDED

YOU CAN HANDLE THE TRUTH



An easy-to-understand explanation of specific law-related issues.

DISCLAIMER: *This information does not constitute legal advice; don't get your legal advice from a newsletter, only get legal advice from a practising lawyer!*

You've probably committed a crime. If you've ever been drunk in public, or if you've ever experienced the cheap thrill of only remembering the garlic in your pocket at the register and staying silent, you've committed a crime.

Whilst many people who get caught doing these things (whether by the general public or police) get let off with a stern word, we know that things like racial, sexual and class biases factor into the decision making of individuals and particularly institutions like the Victorian Police. This is why the criminalisation of minor crimes is so important; because a broad spectrum of society commits them, but in practice people will exercise their discretion when deciding whether to pursue a person for it.

The reason why the (in practice) discretionary nature of minor crimes matters at all, is because convictions are recorded on a person's criminal record.

Criminal records are kept by each state and territory in Australia. A person's criminal record does not only contain convictions (which means 'findings of guilt'); it also contains other interactions with the criminal justice system, such as penalties, appearances in court, or matters under investigation.

When a national criminal record check is conducted for an individual, the police in each state and territory in Australia is asked to share the criminal history held for that individual. Each

state and territory then administers its own document release protocols, which applies various legislation.

Up until mid-March 2021 in Victoria, most things entered into a person's criminal record would remain there for the person's entire life.

However in mid-March, Victoria was the last jurisdiction in Australia to introduce a 'spent convictions' scheme. When a conviction is 'spent', this means that it will no longer be disclosable on your criminal record.

Under the new legislation, most adult convictions (except for serious convictions) will be 'spent' after 10 years. For children, their convictions will be spent after 5 years. Some things will be immediately spent, such as findings of guilt with no convictions recorded or where the conviction relates to fines.

This is the major breakthrough that various organisations have been advocating for decades for. Victoria's anti-discrimination legislation has also been amended so that discrimination on the basis of a person's 'spent conviction' is unlawful.

Part of the reason why criminal records are an important issue is because they are used so routinely in Victoria by prospective employers in the recruitment process. Victoria Police conducted 718,968 police record checks over the 2019-20 financial year. This is up from 477,500 in 2014-15. Allowing employers access to findings without conviction, or historic and irrelevant convictions, creates more precarity than is necessary in a person's employment.

You can ask the police, a court or tribunal for a copy of your criminal record.

NB: there are still some particular employers and licensing bodies are allowed to gain access to your spent convictions, such as volunteering or working with children and disability workers.

By BB

ARTIST OF THE MONTH



By Aoife Billings

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DETENTION CENTRE IN FAWKNER

A Best Western Hotel in Fawkner has been partially operating as a detention centre, or, an 'alternative place of detention' (APOD), since mid-2019.

This fact was made public by Cnr Sue Bolton in December 2020, who expressed her mortification at the fact that APODs can be set up by the federal government in hotels in Moreland (and likely elsewhere) without needing to notify the local council.

As it stands, under the Migration Act 1954 (Cth), the federal government is empowered to set up detention centres by buying or leasing properties, as long as that land is considered suitable for the purposes of detaining persons without a visa. This means that the ability to set up APODs is excessively easy for the federal government.

Darebin Council faced similar revelations in early 2020 after an APOD was established in Mantra Hotel in Preston. In response to public outcry at refugees being held indefinitely in the hotel, Darebin Council voted to get legal advice regarding whether Mantra Hotel was in breach of their planning permit. The legal advice they received was that there was no breach of the planning permit and therefore no way for Darebin to enact enforcement against Mantra.

Moreland Council is considering a similar approach to using planning laws to stop this

practice. Under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic) – which Moreland Councillors are compelled to uphold – operators of a hotel must have a permit for utilising the land for 'accommodation'. These permits only enable hotel operators to use the land for accommodation; they can't, for example, suddenly decide to operate any other type of business that they want.

The live question up for debate is: what type of land use is running a detention centre? Under the Planning Scheme, there is no definition for detention. As Cnr James Conlan pointed out in the July 2021 Council Meeting, where there is no category under the Planning Scheme for the type of land use taking place, then a person must obtain a permit, which must be approved by Moreland Council. As yet, the Best Western Hotel in Fawkner has not obtained a permit for their changed activities.

Whilst it has been uncovered there are unlikely to be refugees being held in the Best Western Hotel at the moment, we know that creating APODs in the community are increasingly common. With the Afghani refugee crisis unfolding, it's important that Moreland take action now rather than later, and put a stop to dangerous precedents.

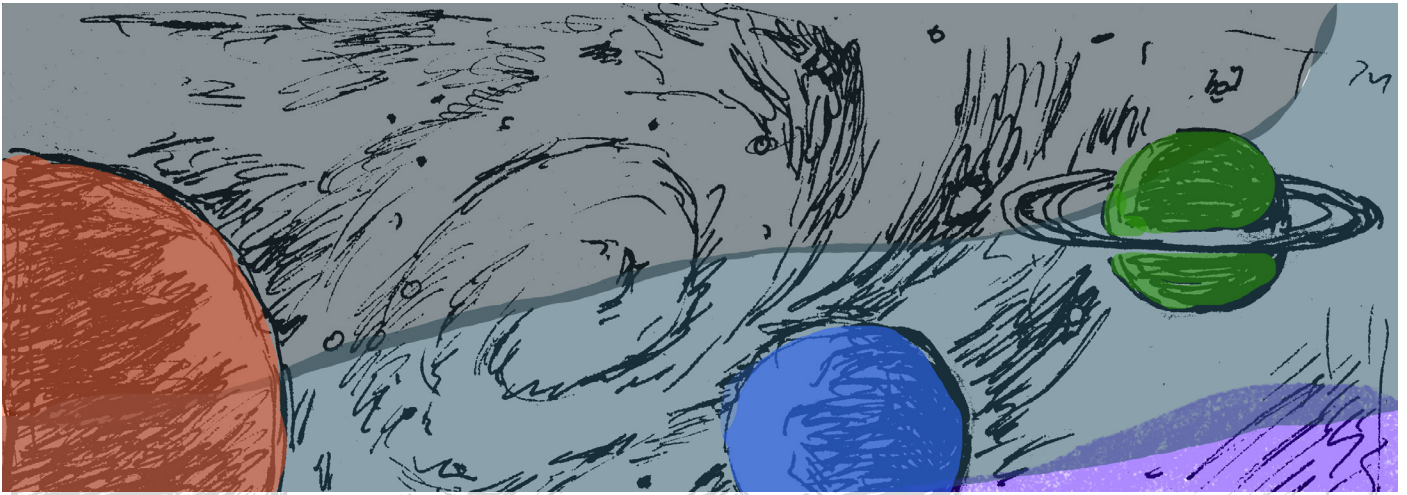
By SAS & BB

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Since receiving the Covid 19 vaccine at a pot-plant strewn Brunswick clinic, I've felt myself drawn towards the fridge both day and night. I'm very angry because at the time, the doctor assured me that the vaccine would not make me magnetic, clearly stating that it "does not contain ingredients that can produce an electromagnetic field at your injection site". I now intend to sue for coerced adhesion.

– Jimmy Neutron





WHAT'S UP?

During October, Venus, refulgent in the western twilight sky, will keep moving away from the Sun to reach its furthest apparent separation at the month's end. On the 9th, the planet will appear to be caught in the claws of the constellation Scorpius, with a New Moon below, and reddish Antares above. On the next evening these three bodies will form a striking triangle.

Popularly used star names for Western astronomers have generally been taken from Arabic, Greek, and Roman cultures, most stars using the name of their constellation. Prominent stars have their own name as well, e.g., Antares for Alpha Scorpii, the brightest star in Scorpius. However, the International Astronomical Union is aiming to give more stars individual names, drawn from a wider range of cultures, including, for the first time, Australian first nations.

For the Wardaman people of Northern Australia, the stars in the constellation Scorpius have long been important in their tradition of initiation ceremonies, each star representing a significant character. One such is Larawag, the signal watcher, who checks that none but legitimate participants in the ceremony are present, only giving the go-ahead when this is so. Now, the star in Scorpius which was previously known to Western astronomers as Epsilon Scorpii (i.e., fifth brightest star in Scorpius), will be formally and internationally known by its ages-old Wardaman name of Larawag.

The Southern Taurids meteor shower will peak on October 10th, with up to 5 sightings per hour- look near the V-shaped Hyades after midnight.

On the 14th, Saturn, and on the 15th, Jupiter, will each be separated by only a few degrees from

the waxing Moon in the western evening sky.

On the 17th, Venus, still moving through Scorpius, will be within two degrees of Antares.

The planet Mercury will make a typically brief and difficult appearance on November 4th. Look low in the east at 6:30 am (DST) to see it lined up between the star Spica and the almost-New Moon, just risen.

On November 8th, in the evening western sky the crescent Moon and Venus will be very close, in the Teapot. This modest asterism in Sagittarius does not stand out in brightness, but to look at the Teapot is to look towards the Galactic Centre of our Milky Way Galaxy, a region so densely populated by massive stars that this area should shine out in our night sky brighter than the Full Moon – if it were not for all the interstellar dust blocking the light from us.

The Moon in its First Quarter phase will pass very close to Saturn on November 10th, and to Jupiter on the 11th.

In mid-November, there is a good chance of spotting a meteor in the night sky. On the 12th, the Northern Taurids shower peaks, with up to 5 sightings per hour; best viewing after 3am (moonset). On the 18th, the Leonids shower peaks (near 'The Sickie' asterism), and on the 21st, the alpha-Monoceratids shower (between Sirius and Procyon) – but the presence of the Full Moon will make it harder to see any but the brightest of these. This Full Moon will be going through a partial, near total, eclipse on November 19th. Catching the mid-eclipse at 8pm as the Moon rises in the twilight will be difficult, but the later stages of the eclipse will be easier viewing as light fades and the Moon ascends.

By Vlack

WHAT EXTENT OF MY COMFORT DO I OWE TO OUR CURRENT SYSTEM OF CAPITALISM?

And where does the answer leave me?



My life is filled with a lot of comforts; an electric blanket, a good bath, the ability to go to a store and buy a variety of different food that I haven't needed to grow or process myself, video games, a decent transport system.

In many ways I live the way monarchs have lived throughout history, only they directly and visibly relied upon – and upheld with physical violence – a system of slavery and serfs. In my case, the things propping up my lifestyle are made to appear 'out of my hands'. Even so, I have fossil fuels and badly treated workers that sustain my lifestyle (and probably slavery as well). To me, the differences aren't significant enough to feel okay about how I live my life.

I want to know what has caused this in order to know what to do about it. Is it capitalism that has made my life so comfortable? Capitalism, the socio-economic system that is driven by accumulation of private profit for private wealth? In so many ways I think yes. But these are things I don't think we would have wanted if we consider the layers of increased ecological destruction, enclosure of commons, slavery, colonisation, inequality, oppression of workers and alienation from life that this system has also brought us.

So, what do I do about it? Ideas I have are to keep resisting and building alternatives, blockading, defending, healing, organising, empowering, working in solidarity and conversing, but

all that isn't very concrete. One concrete thing is thinking through and connecting myself to the life cycle of everything I consume to survive and thrive. I try to do this without shaming myself and others, but as an anti-capitalist project to re-attach myself to my material needs and imagining what true sustainability and interconnectedness could be and can be now. My imagination tells me I'll have a lot less cool stuff and easy comfort if I actually take the ecology and autonomy of my fellow beings seriously. But also, maybe I'll have a closer-knit community that works together on achieving things, which will probably make me happier.

Another concrete action is to continue being grateful, a nice tradition my family passed onto me, though I'm separating it from its religious roots (my grandpa always said 'we are so blessed'). This helps with the other concrete action I'll mention, which is looking after myself so that I can put most of my waking hours and energy into working out how to change the current system, and doing that with (mostly) a big smile, a sense of humour, patience and openness, which is creating the world I want to see.

By Anisa Rogers

LOCAL SHORT STORY OF THE MONTH

FIVE POEMS

The reviews for the date were in:

6.1, 7.0, 5.8, 3.4 (!) from the panel.

"No chance of a second, then," thought Colm.

"Bloody judges."

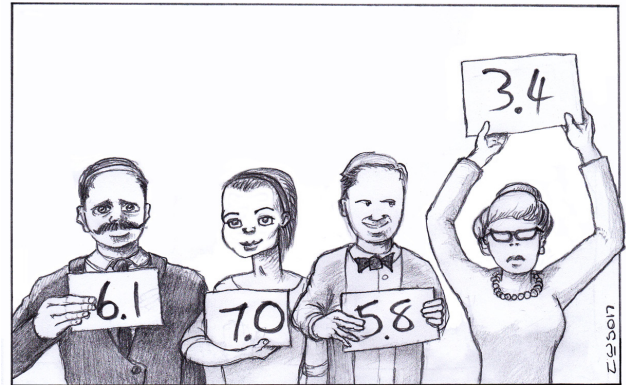
He read the feedback from Judge 4,

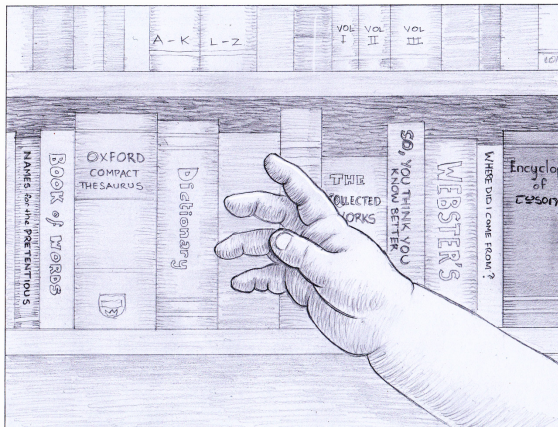
(the one who'd given him 3.4) –

"Absolutely munted," it read.

It was his mother's handwriting.

"The system needs an overhaul," he grumbled into his toast.





"We're thinking Camphor Tourniquet if a boy,

and Penchbress Narco Golightly

if embodying more ceramics flair,"

I overheard at the cafe.

I grabbed my cup of dog soup and scuttled away, sweating.

Outside I was given a parking ticket

for someone else's car.

I freedom-kissed the parking inspector, but they were...

unmoved, at best.

In 2038,

NASA, with the aid of private capital,

plan to project the 1960 film *Some Like It Hot*

on the surface of the moon.

The moon is likely to giggle

and break apart in the process,

Destroying Earth.

Please donate to my GoFundMe



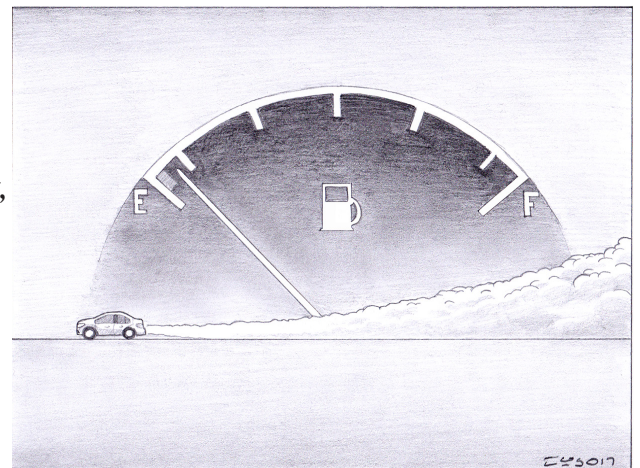
The world's ugliest crooner decided
to remove his mask, that night –
it was a mistake.
Everybody spewed.
Tully, the janitor, sighed.
He had a feeling he'd miss the midnight screening of Pink Flamingos now.
He rubbed Vick's on his top lip,
to help with the smell.
In the shape of a pencil moustache, of couse.

* * *



Chrissy had a revelation in the desert
Where everything became clear at once.
“Fab!” she shouted, and jumped in her Jetta.

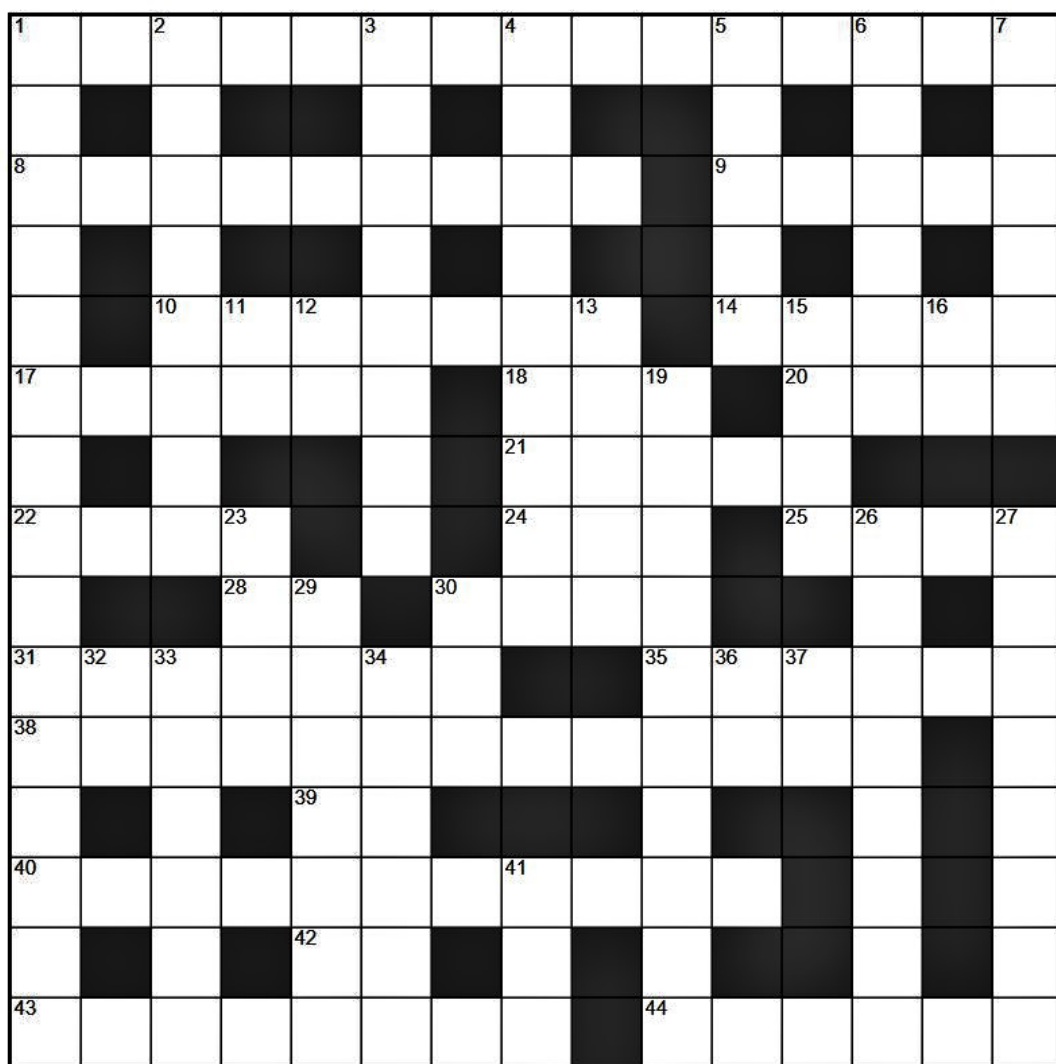
As she got back on the main road, though,
she realised she'd plum forgotten the rev.
So she headed back –
80km, thank you very much –
and re-revelationed herself.
This time she was sure she'd committed it to memory,
but again, back on the highway, it was gone.
The petrol tank was nearing E,
so she figured she'd leave it.
Plus she was famished,
and there was an Oporto at the next offramp.



By B Haughtly

Illustrations by Tyson Kalender (TheDrawingDroid on Etsy)

Please submit your own short story (max 500 words), art or articles (between 300-500 words) to: thecoburgmeddler@gmail.com

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD*By Ross Clark (@redchumpo)***ACROSS**

1 Up which major traffic artery in Coburg was a kangaroo spotted bouncing on September 23 of this year? (9,6)

8 Which former Deputy Prime Minister of the UK is now Facebook's Vice-President of Global Affairs? (4,5)

9 Which Scottish folk-singer wrote and performed the song 'And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda?' in 1971? (5)

10 What is the final word of the Star Wars film denoted as Episode VII in the series? (7)

14 What can be a Bruno Mars song, any one of over 150 species of ray, or a type of urban park? (5)

17 What along with sine and tangent is one of the most common functions of trigonometry? (6)

18 What's the name of that sticky stuff that comes out when you burst a spot or an abscess?

(3)

20 Which empire fought the Spanish for 40 years until the death of Túpac Amaru in 1572? (4)

21 (with 15 Down) "If you want to know if he loves you so, it's ____ ____" Cher, 1990 (2,3,4)

22 What name precedes 'Belt' in the US Midwest to describe a large area that has declined from its industrial peak during the 20th century? (4)

24 What is the prefix meaning 'before'? (3)

25 What word meaning 'certain' was a number 1 single by Take That, and the trading name of the Rexona deoderant in the UK market? (4)

28 What is the internet top level domain code for Israel? (2)

30 What word when repeated signals a listener's agreement with the point being made by a speaker, particularly in Parliament? (4)

31 Sharing its name with a poem by Larkin, what plant (in the singular) with the binomial *Avena Fatua* can be ground into porridge and is often

considered

a weed? (4,3)

35 What is the first name of the Swedish musician Malmsteen, rated by Time magazine as the 9th greatest guitarist of all time? (6)

38 Which star of Trainspotting (1996) uttered the immortal line: "That lassie got glassed, and no cunt leaves here till we find out what cunt did it" (6,7)

39 How is the Japanese currency pronounced? (2)

40 Which musical English town claims King Arthur's grave and was supposedly visited by Jesus Christ, as

described in Blake's poem 'Jerusalem/And did those feet in ancient time'? (11)

42 What abbreviation serves both the Italian province of Turin, and a major city in Ontario? (2)

43 Which is the largest Australian island to be named after a person? (8)

44 What two words generally precede "little" and the strangulation of Bart by Homer Simpson? (3,3)

DOWN

1 Who performs as Bart Simpson in the popular TV Show? (5,10)

2 Described by Kofi Annan as "perhaps the single most successful international agreement", the Montreal Accord of 1987 averted a global catastrophe by banning what? (3,5)

3 Kobe Bryant, Shaquil O'Neill, Magic Johnson & Karim Abdul-Jabbar have all played for which sporting 2020-championship-winning sports team? (2,6)

4 What part of an ancient European musical instrument gives its name to a National Park on Melbourne's outskirts, close to the Calder Freeway? (5,4)

5 The Alaskan Republican Senator Ted Stevens became a meme in 2006 when he described the internet as "a series of" what? (5)

6 Which Sonic the Hedgehog character, known in the West as Dr Robotnik, was named in Japan after a

lyric in a popular hit by the Beatles? (6)

7 Which two words, repeated, give the title of the 1978 Booker Prize winning novel by Iris Murdoch? (3,3)

11 Which abbreviation for a US state can also be

an abbreviation for the cricket team currently ranked 8th in the world? (2)

12 In English, what indefinite article precedes a vowel sound? (2)

13 Which Alabama-born avant-garde jazz musician fronted the Arkestra from the 1950s to 1992? (3,2)

15 (with 21 Across) "If you want to know if he loves you so, it's ____ ____ ____" Cher. (2,3,4)

16 What was Theodore Calvin's nickname in Magnum PI? (2)

19 Which 9-time Grammy winner starred in a 2004 episode of One Tree Hill entitled 'The First Cut Is The Deepest'? (6,4)

23 Coming from Old English meaning 'time', what twice-daily phenomenon is affected by factors including atmospheric pressure, wind and gravity? (4)

26 Which New York-based magazine features regular sections including 'Who's Like Us?', 'Who Wore It Best?' & 'Fashion Police', and changed its name in 2000 to reflect its new distribution period? (2,6)

27 Carve your name into my arm, instead of stressed I lie here charmed, cos there's nothing else to do, ____ ____ and every you. Placebo. (5,2)

29 What is the first name of the most-awarded female country musician of all time, with 24 #1 singles and (for the 1970s) is the only female to have one the ACM Artist of the Decade? (7)

30 Which Taiwanese electronics company manufactured the first Android device in 2008? (3)

32 Named for one of Zeus' lovers, what, discovered by Galileo in 1610, is the most geologically active object in the solar system? (2)

33 Shaped like a letter of the alphabet - what concrete or steel girder structures form much of the basis for the Moreland rail overpass? (1,5)

34 "To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving; to rest ____ ____ and meditate love's ecstasy" Khalil Gibran, The Prophet. (2,4)

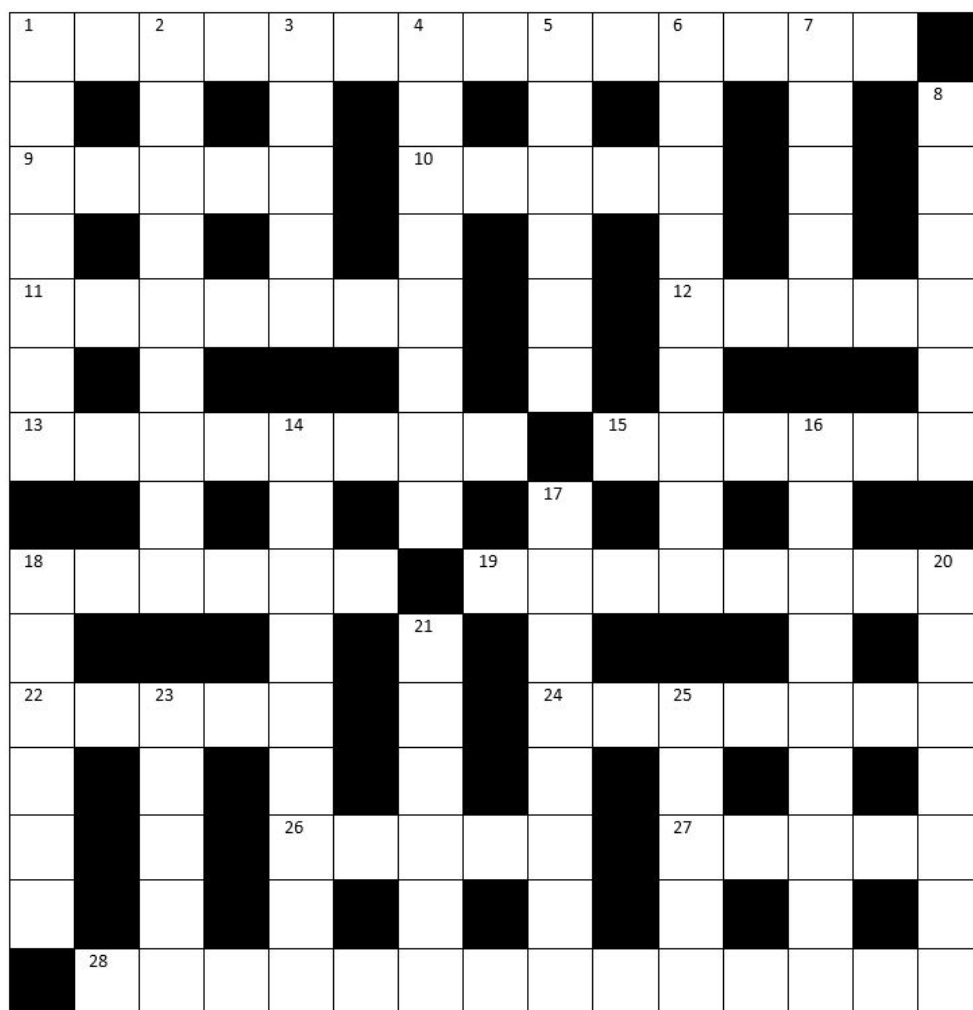
36 In which US State (given here as a two-letter postal code) is Niagara Falls (2)

37 What is the internet domain name abbreviation for Greenland? (2)

41 Which hazardous chemical, still in use in Australian supermarkets, was banned from thermal paper in the EU after it was found that 15% of human exposure was from thermal receipts? (3)

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

By Joe Foley



ACROSS

- 1 Film star tortured new ladies daily (6,3-5)
 9 Zest on our many prawn hargow starters (5)
 10 Prune and chop thorned Alpen flower (5)
 11 Holds up under stress and endless extremes (7)
 12 Sailors' left love in this city? (5)
 13 Loose cows and friend reverts to sarcastic offering. (4,4)
 15 Shoe enthusiast embracing Myanmar cosplay (6)
 18 Joan and John show loveless bird around South Australia (6)
 19 Weapon of honcho bird for spooner (8)
 22 Protect from irrevocable fragment rebound (5)
 24 A quiet saucer is the best place to stick your butt? (7)
 26 Pong is on this, a rat I whiffed! (5)
 27 Love region for mile-high layer? (5)
 28 Turbulent chaos is great ol' diggers (14)

DOWN

- 1 Little construction workers hinder medics with dribble... (7)
 2 ...boasts about promenades irresponsibly... (8)
 3 ...drug is out there (5)
 4 Calamity on screen when fish swallows said calamity (5,3)
 5 Royal servant eyes home land insiders (6)
 6 Former English politico seen with Von Trier and some models (9)
 7 Top three trips? Cadiz, Miami, Tver. Oh and former Smyrna (5)
 8 Firstly, I don't include overly milked, stereotypical phrases. (6)
 14 Spooners stone chariot for insect. (9)
 16 Highland fling flummoxes Brae Scots. (5,4)
 17 Test hosts Australian First Eleven with three axes. (8)
 18 Tolkien monster turned on cool Roman academic (6)
 20 Dry humour was oddly surly, thrown in all directions. (7)