



# THE COBURG MEDDLER

END OF YEAR EDITION

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## MEET YOUR NEW COUNCIL?



The announcement of the new Moreland Council in early November was tainted by the revelation of suspected electoral fraud in the form of vote tampering in the North-West ward.

The main areas affected were the suburbs of Pascoe Vale, Fawkner and Gowanbrae, where, at the time of ballot counting, a number of residents reported having police at their doors warning of mail being stolen in the area. A large number of residents had previously contacted the VEC with requests for ballot papers which they had never received in the mail. When the ballot counting commenced, workers reportedly discovered hundreds of ballot papers that had been returned twice, with non-matching signatures.

Allegations that a Labor candidate was offering certain individuals \$500 for every 50 ballot papers stolen from mailboxes in the North-West ward have since been made, and some Councilors have said they believe they know who is

responsible. However, there is still much conjecture surrounding the case, and the Meddler can't afford a defamation case right now.

This version of electoral tampering– the acquiring of ballots and forgery of votes – demonstrates a flagrant disregard for the will of the people. It is also surprising in its recklessness.

THIS STORY CONTINUES PAGE 3

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*This newspaper was written and developed on Wurundjeri Land of the Kulin Nation. Sovereignty was never ceded. If possible, people should contribute to the Pay the Rent campaign. This initiative funds groups that advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders: <https://www.invasionday.org/pay-the-rent-campaigns>*

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

### COBURG LIBRARY RE-OPENED

Alright everyone; bring them back. Bring them all back. Straighten the dog ears; remove the coffee cup; fill your kitchen sink with water and slowly run the book through it. Hold the book tightly so you don't introduce too much water into the pages. Stand the book upright for a while; don't fan the pages. Lay the book on its back. Turn on a fan; don't fan the pages. At this point your book will now be considered a 'wet book'. This is the first of many steps in your book becoming a dry book. Email us for further steps.

### GAS LEAK IN COBURG

On 15 November an emergency warning was issued for residents and pedestrians in close proximity to 424 Sydney Road, Coburg. People were urged to close and seal up windows and doors due to a gas main being impacted by machinery. Within a few hours everything was back to normal; albeit leaving a few rattled and some homes smelly.



### NED KELLY GUARDS TOMATOES

Pentridge has clearly

attempted to get the tone of respecting the dark history of the Pentridge and the need to utilise the site, however Ned Kelly guarding the tomatoes at Richies misses the mark.

### THE NEW MORELAND COUNCIL

#### NORTH-WEST WARD

Oscar Yildiz (Ind)  
Helen Davies (Ind)  
Milad El-Halabi (Labor)  
Angelica Panopolous (Greens)

#### NORTH-EAST WARD

Sue Bolton (Sue Bolton Moreland Team)  
Adam Pulford (Greens)  
Annalivia Carli-Hannan (Labor)  
Helen Pavlidis-Mihalakos (Ind)

#### SOUTH WARD

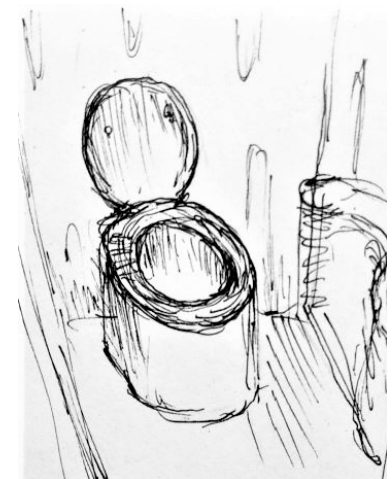
James Conlan (Greens)  
Mark Riley (Greens)  
Lambros Tapinos (Labor)

Welcome to the new Moreland Council! 6 of the Councillors were re-elected, with 5 newcomers. This iteration of the Council sees a familiar, distinct political split on party grounds. The Greens have managed to retain 4 seats on the council, and Labor have (tentatively...) gained a seat, putting their numbers at 3. Sue Bolton managed to retain her seat and the remaining 3 seats go to Independents.

With the ideological division so evenly split in Council, alliances or at the very least, goodwill, between Councillors matters. This is why the fall-out following the nomination and election of the new mayor is significant. On 20 November, the Councillors were set to vote amongst themselves for a new mayor to replace outgoing May-

or, Cr Tapinos. Generally the Councillors will negotiate and make deals before the day, ostensibly deciding the outcome well in advance. According to an incensed Cr Yildiz on his social media account, he was set to become the next Mayor for a year.

According to Yildiz, minutes before the vote, Cr Annalivia Carli-Hannan informed Yildiz that she had managed to secure the Greens' votes and was going to withdraw her support for Yildiz. Judging by the livestream of the event, Yildiz was outraged. He later claimed that Carli-Hannan had been actively supporting him to get the position in the lead up to the vote. Yildiz exited the council hall with such outrage and haste that his chair was left spinning as Mayor Carli-Hannan delivered her acceptance speech.



### PENTRIDGE COMMUNITY GARDEN INSTALLS A TOILET

Never before has membership to a community garden been so enticing. The Pentridge Community Garden grants access to a communal gardening bed (rather than individual plots) and a newly acquired toilet. They are back to accepting new members after a COVID hiatus.

## STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Meddler is not in the business of handing out tips to electoral fraudsters, but surely a prospective ballot-pincher would contact the VEC and enquire: 'what happens if I don't receive my ballot paper?'. They would invariably have been told, as many Gowanbrae residents were, that they would simply be issued a new ballot paper.

The election results have, at the time of writing, been referred to the Victoria Police and the services of expert handwriting analysts have been engaged. The election results will likely be contested in VCAT in the new year. This means that the Councillors from the North-West ward,

who were sworn in to office in mid-November, will likely need to recontest their seats.

Whether one of the current sitting Councillors was responsible for the crime hangs over the new Moreland Council. The tension was certainly palpable in live swearing in ceremony, as each elected Councillor took their turn to announce their commitment to serving the people of Moreland. Unfortunately the aspirational new Council is stymied by this, the most sordid event in Moreland's electoral history.

*By SAS & BB*

## ACTIVIST CORNER: GET INVOLVED

### REFUGEE WEEKLY ACTION

Every weekend Refugee Action Collective have been showing up outside Mantra Hotel in Preston to protest the 65 men being imprisoned whilst their refugee status is being determined by the Australian Government. The men have been held in Mantra Hotel for more than a year. Many of the men inside the Hotel have spent over 7 years waiting to be processed in off-shore detention centres. The men were originally brought to Australia under the Medivac Scheme, mainly for mental health treatment.

Refugee Action Collective gather outside the hotel at 3pm on Bell St every Saturday. For more information, contact Refugee Action Collective over Facebook.

### ANTI-EVICTION PROTESTS

The \$150 million 'Homelessness to a Home' program that was established during the pandemic to provide housing support to people experiencing homelessness in Victoria saw around 2000 people in ho-

tel accommodation. The plan was always meant to include a pathway from hotel accommodation to sustainable, long-term accommodation either in social or public housing.

In mid-November, the Renters and Housing Union (RAHU) were informed that DHHS were withdrawing the hotel support to people who were refusing 'suitable' alternatives. People experiencing homelessness have explained that some of the accommodation deemed 'suitable' by DHHS includes returning to perpetrators of family violence or private accommodation that takes up too much of their Centrelink payments.

On 30 November, RAHU organised a snap protest outside of the IBIS hotel in the CBD where people are beginning to be evicted from their emergency hotel accommodation.

If you would like to get involved in the anti-eviction movement or follow developments in tenancy laws in Victoria, visit the RAHU website.

### DJAB WURRUNG

The Djab Wurrung Embassy have called for more assistance from supporters following the renewed attempts to fell the culturally significant trees they have been fighting to preserve. On Monday 26 October the Directions tree was cut down. The Directions tree was considered to be roughly 350 years old. The Embassy started in early 2018, although Djab Wurrung elders have been attempting to protect the trees since early-2017 when VicRoads reapplied for the highway upgrade to be approved by the State government. The approval was originally granted Aboriginal Victoria, who were advised around this time by Martang, the then-Registered Aboriginal Corporation in the area, who concluded that there were no trees of cultural significance. Since this finding, archaeologist reports and Djab Wurrung elders have been advocating for the significance of the birthing trees to be recognised and respected.

The current embassy at



the site has been specific about their request; change the path of the new roads to protect the trees.

With the felling of the trees in the Gandolfo Gardens in Coburg still fresh in the mind of Coburgians, consider assisting the Djab Wurrung Embassy either with your physical presence, your spreading the word or with your financial assistance to keep the fight going.

### IMARC CONFERENCE

Every year, Melbourne is host to the International Mining

and Resources Conference. The conference aims to create networking opportunities for major mining and resource companies and investors. The organisers of IMARC claim that the conference is directly responsible for over \$46 million generated in business and \$100.3 million in investments made in the mining and resource sector.

The conference is also supported by and attended by Victorian and Federal MPs.

For the past 5 years, people from all backgrounds have protested the conference.

This year, activists created a week long anti-IMARC conference which included panel events and presentations ranging from the history of extractivism internationally and in Australia, to introductory workshops, such as 'Capitalism: 101'. The next IMARC conference is 25-27 October 2021; if you want to get involved in the next counter-conference, or view the content from this years' conference, visit the Blockade IMARC page on Facebook.

*By Edwina Snagge*



## NATIONALISE AGED CARE HOMES AND MANDATE STAFFING LEVELS

The COVID-19 disaster in residential aged-care homes in Victoria and New South Wales is a tragedy, but it was waiting to happen because the system was set up to put profits first.

The main lesson from the disgraceful treatment of the elderly in the pandemic is that the privatisation of this essential health service must end.

Aged care homes need to be nationalised now to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and to give residents their health, safety and dignity back.

The deregulation of the aged care sector began after the introduction of the federal Aged Care Act 1997 allowed mandatory staffing ratios to be removed and for the aged-care workforce to be casualised. This has led to insufficient pay, with no entitlement to paid sick leave for the largely casual work force. Big corporations such

as Bupa and Estia Health, “approved providers”, are the behemoths of aged care: they own many aged care homes and make big profits while also receiving \$1 billion each year from taxpayers, via the federal government.

These profit-gouging companies are not specialists in health or aged care. The law stipulates that they are not required to employ a registered nurse to be on-site 24 hours a day.

In 2018, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) commissioned the Tax Justice Network (TJN) to investigate possible tax avoidance by the for-profit aged-care companies. It discovered that while Bupa received almost \$7.5 billion in total income (2015–16), it only paid \$105 million in tax on a taxable income of just \$352 million. It also found that Bupa’s Australian aged-care business made more than \$663 million in 2017, with 70% (\$468 million) coming from government

funding. While funding from government and resident fees increased in 2017, Bupa paid almost \$3 million less to their employees and suppliers.

The TJN said then that it was difficult to get “a detailed and complete picture” of the extent of tax avoidance because “Australian law is not currently strong enough”. But we know enough to know that for-profit aged-care companies are doing what they are set up to do.

Peter Rozen QC, who is assisting the commissioners looking into aged care, stated the system is not failing but is “operating as it was designed to operate”.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety heard on August 10 that the rate of coronavirus deaths in Australia’s aged-care homes is among the highest in the world. This is a shocking indictment of how a rich country treats its most vulnerable.

Rozen was scathing of New South Wales Health’s reluctance in May to allow infected residents to be moved out of Newmarch House, the aged care home operated by Anglicare, and into hospital care saying it was “intolerable”. Newmarch House had become the epicentre of COVID-19 infections in NSW and families were so distressed at the authorities’ lack of action they resorted to giving the detail of their fear and frustration to the media.

In Victoria, a similar disaster has transpired since July as the active coronavirus cases for both patients and workers in aged care rises. As of August 10, there have been at least 138 deaths linked to aged-care facilities in Victoria, including 171 cases linked to St Basil’s Home for the Aged in Fawkner, where the entire workforce was placed in quarantine.

Only 180 of the 770 aged-care facilities are state owned and run. Only these have prescribed ratios of registered nurses to patients, and the security of a registered nurse on site 24 hours a day. In the privately-run facilities, sometimes a single nurse is required to supervise care for 100–200 elderly residents.

While private aged-care facilities are funded and regulated by the federal government, state governments need to stand up and stop them rorting the system and treating residents as cash cows. The federal opposition has been characteristically quiet about reviewing the for-profit mod-

el. Its 2012 aged care “reform” package is credited with jumping on the Productivity Commission’s review of the aged-care system in 2011 and pushing the user-pays model with an emphasis on change, “choice” and “flexibility” for the “consumer”.

The only humane long-term solution is to put the aged-care system back into public hands. That would help ensure it can be properly regulated, with staffing ratios for nursing and non-nursing staff enforced.

As a councillor in the North-East Ward of Moreland City Council, where St Basil’s Home for the Aged is located, I’ve seen the distress as 20 elderly members of the Greek community have passed away. These residents did not need to die.

Aged-care homes should be about providing good quality care for residents. Last year’s interim report from the commission found the system failed to meet the needs of the elderly, and was “unkind and uncaring” towards them. It also said the sector suffered from severe difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, and that pay and conditions were poor and education and training patchy. To get through this crisis safely, private aged-care homes must immediately be compelled to mandate professional staff-to-resident ratios.

In addition, steps must be taken now to nationalise the aged-care system and impose regulations to ensure the health and safety of all residents and workers, as the ANMF has said for years.

*By Sue Bolton*

*[Sue Bolton is a Moreland councillor and a Socialist Alliance member]*



## MALL-CONTENTS

*An anonymous worker (AW) gave us some of her time to explain the state of the Coburg Market, where she has been working for the last 10 years.*

AW: There's been a big slide in the age of the customers, in general. When I first started working here, there was a lot of cultural diversity which has slowly started to change. Now you see people from Brunswick, people from Northcote. Although there are many people still coming into the market, it is not getting the respect that it deserves; it's a cultural icon in Coburg.

MEDDLER: In your opinion, what needs to change for it to get the respect it deserves?

AW: I don't know. But the Council are not doing enough. We've got a trader's association here; the Coburg Traders Association, but we are not being spoken to as businesses. We are not

being connected. The problem here is that the younger generation don't stop here because we are surrounded by hypermarkets. We have two Coles and one Woolworths. And then we have 10 souvlaki places. There is no niche market anymore. We've been here for hundreds of years. Everyone knows it. Young people who used to come with their parents, are the older people who are the regulars now. But now we're surrounded. We get people from Coles coming here and checking the prices and charging below what the Coburg Market has listed. Then they draw the customers because of the convenience.

And the carpark - now, people need to pay for the car parking if you want to stay longer than three hours. The older people who usually want to go to the pharmacy, go to the market, talk to others and so on, now they mainly go to where they can get things done quicker - to Coles. Why would they come here?

MEDDLER: What would you like to see happen?

AW: I don't know what the Council can do - but they don't protect the market. I would have studied the area properly and done engagement with the businesses before they allowed the hypermarkets.

There should be money going into the market. Not just into signage. They talk about us as the 'Coburg Icon', but they are destroying it. The Council could say - let's create something in the carpark, and put something in it; face painting on the weekends, or bike stands for all the bicycle people to come. There are little things they could do to make a change. But the Council doesn't come here and ask us what we should do. If they came here, and came up with an idea, then it would be revenue for the Council.

IF YOU'RE A LOCAL  
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## INTERVIEW WITH LOCAL AUTHOR - JANE ROUTLEY

*Jane Routley lives in Moreland and is an award winning author of a number of novels. Earlier this year, Jane released her latest book, Shadow in the Empire of Light.*

MEDDLER: How did you come to be a novelist?

JANE: I wanted to be a writer as soon as I could read. Reading is one of the great ways of visiting other worlds and living other lives. If you write, you can create the kind of worlds you want to visit. It's the most satisfying activity I know except when it's not working. Then it's a pain.

MEDDLER: What inspired your latest novel?

JANE: I was reading a lot of gritty fantasy along the lines of Game of Thrones and it suddenly struck me that it wasn't much fun to be a woman in the kind of traditional medieval kind of society most fantasy novels are set in. So I thought I'd create one in which it's more fun to be a woman. After all I'm writing fantasy. Why not have the kind of world I like?

MEDDLER: What are the biggest challenges of being a fantasy author?

JANE: The fact that it doesn't count as serious writing is pretty annoying. Its improving but a lot of readers of mainstream fiction still regard it as a childish ghetto and won't be seen reading it in public. Yet fantasy has lots of serious themes. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings explores the corrupting nature of power. The evils of discrimination are a strong theme in Harry Potter. To do that while still writing a good fun yarn takes skill.

MEDDLER: Is your character of the telepathic cat based on someone?

JANE: No! Unless you count Specky the cat who we owned as a child. But I love cats. Developing an allergy to them is one of the great sadnesses of

my life. I love watching the activities of the cats in my neighbourhood. My heroine's cat is her best friend and also a wry critical voice in the story.

MEDDLER: Are there any local places that are good for helping your productivity?

JANE: I love the Upfield train line. A train journey is great for getting ideas. So much to see on the way. But during the lockdown I've also discovered how delightful it is to cycle around the Fawceter Cemetery in the afternoon. There are so many beautiful plants there, it's wonderfully quiet and I imagine the lives of the people buried there.

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*Shadow in the Empire of Light.*

*Magic, Murder, Mayhem : But keep it in the family.*

*Shine is an orphan without magical gifts in a family of powerful mages, and is stuck managing the family estates with only an eccentric aunt and a telepathic cat for company. But when the family descend on the house for the annual Fertility Festival, Shine is plunged into intrigue; while helping one cousin to find a compromising letter, rescuing another from an unwelcome alliance and hiding a fugitive, she discovers a smuggling ring, stumbles upon a murderous plot to depose the current Family Matriarch, and is forced to run for her life. Available in paperback in January.*

*Currently available in audio and ebook formats.*  
<https://rebellionpublishing.com/product/shadow-in-the-empire-of-light/>



Author's photo

## HAY FERVOUR: STRAY BALE GARDENING

As precarious living situations in Coburg have become the norm, it is ever more difficult to build your own garden. Yet, there is a unique and simple solution to grow one's own fruit, flowers and vegetables in constricted surroundings, at relatively low effort with maximum flexibility. Straw bale gardens offer a neat, creative and affordable answer to building your own garden bed within days, on a surface as soft as grass or as hard as concrete, in a space as limited as a balcony or as challenging as a contemporary shared backyard.

With simple management, a straw bale will become a flexible and temporary elevated garden bed, without the expense of permanent above ground infrastructure or the issues of dodgy soils and contaminating weeds. Straw bales require no weeding and by nature are impossible to really overwater, do not require crop rotation, can be located literally anywhere and, due to their inherent flexibility, can be turned into useful compost for your next garden, maintaining an organic compound for future seasons.

What is most tricky about a straw bale garden is conditioning and preparing your bales before growing. To condition your bales, you will need to purchase a relatively inexpensive high nitrogen product (with nitrogen level of 14 or greater) to kickstart the conditioning process and water

daily. Once the conditioning of your bales is complete, you are ready to plant your seedlings and direct-sow your seeds. A typical recommendation is that 10 bales will provide a full seasonal yield for two people, meaning that even the smallest of areas will generate an organic growing space that is both flexible, manageable and eco-affordable.

In six steps:

1. Obtain your straw bales, typically online (\$15 each): place them on any surface.
2. Condition your bales: Treat them with a high nitrogen fertilizer (cost \$12 per kg) and spread 100g of nitrogen per 3 bales. Water heavily until soaked, each day until 14-18 days. Give your bales a second dose of nitrogen at the beginning of the second week. Once your bales are conditioned, they should have transformed from straw into a fecund (i.e., smelly) growing material.
3. Pour potting mix across the bales. This becomes the "soil". Plant seedlings and direct-sow seeds into the bales.
4. Water, watch and wait. Some growers will now build trellises around their bales for climbing plants like beans, tomatoes, etc. You can treat your bales now as if they are a typical soil-filled elevated garden bed.
5. Harvest.
6. Once harvesting is done, prepare for the next season with a little more fertiliser and compost to your "soil". Each bale should yield for two seasons, whereafter it can be broken down and composted, allowing you to begin your no-fuss straw bale garden again.

*By Henry Gardner*





of rye, has mayo rather than Russian dressing, and is heavy on cheese. As a result, the balance between salt, fat, and acid is thrown out.

And yet, it does taste good. The ingredients are quality and big on flavour, especially the sauerkraut, which has a good kick. The melted cheese does overpower matters somewhat. Perhaps the sandwich would be better billed as a Reuben toastie.

Alejandra and Christina's Empanadas (also \$15) come in a family of five served with a perfunctory salad of rocket, cabbage, and dill, as well as a chilli salsa and ajo, a Colombian aioli-type sauce. The empanadas themselves are fairly small, made of a thick masa dough housing a potato and black bean puree. The dough is tasty but dominates the filling, and without the condiments these are quite plain.

## FLAVOURS OF COBURG

When you walk into True North, the first thing you'll notice is the décor. It looks as though a group of rockabilly-luchador-skate punks converted a tattoo parlour into a café, walls coated in Old Weird America bric-a-brac, and a Robert Redford mirror. It makes for a cosy and interesting environment, although the inactive pinball machines which will leave your inner child shedding a tear.

There are a welcome number of booths in the dining room, from which your order will be taken and delivered promptly. The food menu is short and the drinks menu long – generally a good ratio – and the prices moderate, from \$7 for a bagel to \$21 for 'The Yeti', a bacon cheeseburger with fries (chips). There's also a complete vegan/vegetarian menu with alternates of all the meat options, and a pastry case at the counter.

Drinks-wise, the gunpowder green tea (\$4) is a step up from the average café green tea, with a pleasant smokiness and not scalded with boiling water. The house-made watermelon fresca (\$5) is even nicer, refreshing and not overly sweet, and makes one curious about their other homemade beverages.

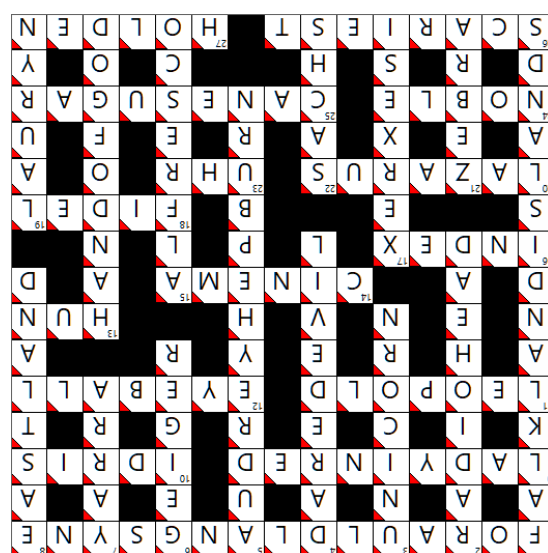
For Reuben purists, the True North Reuben (\$15) literally won't stack up – it comes with only a single layer of pastrami rather than the traditional ream. It also comes on sourdough instead

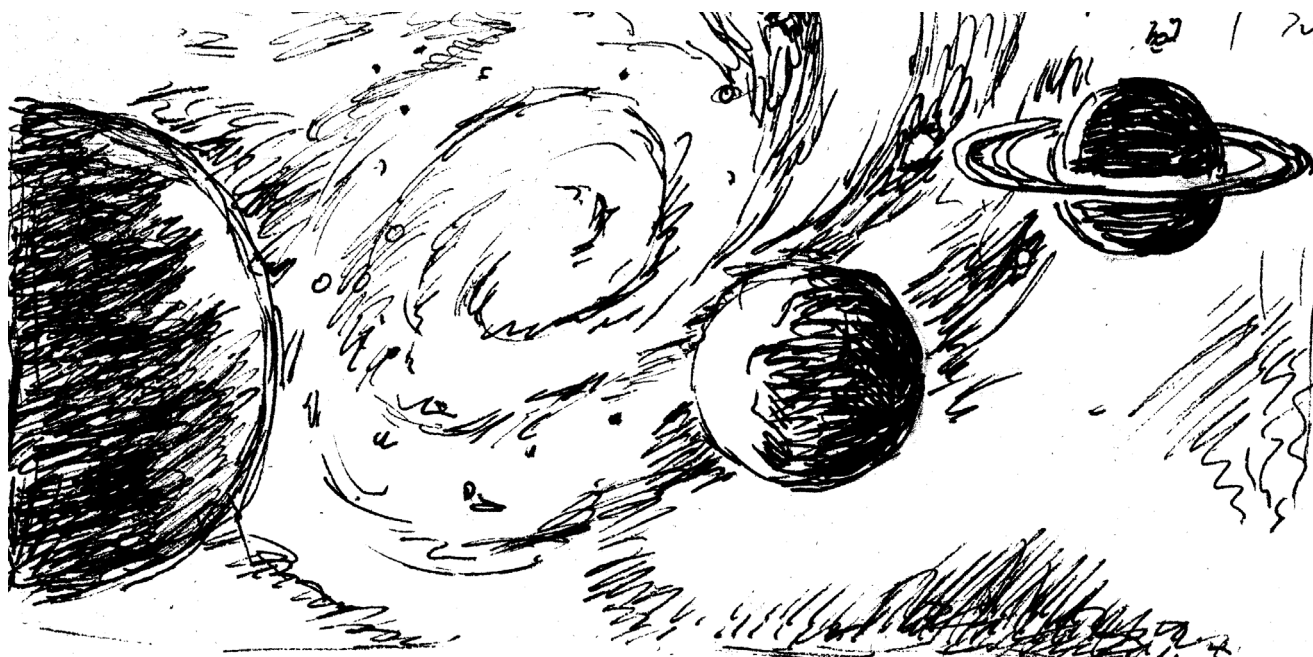
The chips (\$5 small/\$10 large) are simple batons, and thankfully not of the shoestring variety. They feel closer to real potato than many chips but were underseasoned and slightly chewy. Portion sizes for all of the foods were on the smaller side, especially the empanadas, which are closer to an entrée for a hungry traveller.

While I wouldn't go for the food alone, atmosphere counts for a lot when it comes to cafes, and the unique décor and friendly service at the True North goes a long way in this regard.

True North  
2a Munro St, Coburg

*By David Parsons*





## WHAT'S UP?

During December, Venus will be brilliant in the early morning eastern sky. Predawn (about 4 am) on the 13th will find the waning crescent Moon and Venus separated by less than 2 degrees, or about four Moon diameters, low in the east.

Jupiter and Saturn will be remarkably close in the western sky during December twilights. On the 17th, the three-day old crescent Moon will draw within  $3^\circ$  of them, to make a striking trio. Keep watching the two planets, because on the 21st, they will only be  $0.1^\circ$  apart. (Wish for clear skies, because this proximity is only seen once every two decades or so.) The best viewing time is about 8pm- which, on the 21st, also happens to be the time of our Summer Solstice.

Mars is now moving away from the Earth, and its size will diminish by more than half over December. However, it will still stand out in constellation Pisces in the northern sky, in the early night.

Also featuring in the December northern sky are the Geminids, a recurring shower of meteors. (These showers happen when the Earth's orbit crosses a comet's orbit, and the debris from the comet's tail falls into the atmosphere.) As the name implies, the Geminids seem to fall from the constellation of Gemini, near the bright stars Castor and Pollux. The number of meteors that can be seen falling every hour varies, but for the Geminids can reach 150- which is as high as it gets for

any regular meteor shower. Optimum viewing will be after midnight between the 4th and 17th, with peak activity predicted for the 14th.

Lower in the northern night sky is Arcturus, fourth brightest of the stars. Arcturus means 'Guardian of the Bear', protector of Ursa Major, the Great Bear of the deep northern sky.

A more local protector story comes from the Wergaia people of Western Victoria. Marpeankurrk was a woman of this tribe during a time of great drought. She set out to find food for her starving people, but walked for hours, finding nothing. Seeing the mound of a nest of wood ants, she dug into it with her stick, exposing the larvae. In desperation, she tasted one. It was good! She loaded up all she could carry, and was able to save her people. Wood ant larvae became one of their favourite foods, and an essential food source in late winter.

When Marpeankurrk died, she became the star we call Arcturus. Now, in late winter, when Marpeankurrk appears in the northern evening sky, the people begin to collect the wood ant larvae. But later on, when Marpeankurrk sets just after sunset, it is a sign that the larvae are gone, and summer is beginning.

*By Vlack*



Photo: Erik Anderson

## 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!***

### Dogs vs. Cricket

After a long hiatus in lockdown, local sports clubs are finally returning to the fields and ovals across Moreland. On one local oval, this has turned into a literal turf war between the sports club organisers, groundskeepers, and the community members who have, in their absence, enjoyed their exclusive use – dogs (and their humans). Recently this came to a head when a children's cricket coach used a bike lock on the main entrance to the park and insisted that dogs weren't allowed on the field. While the dogs seem unphased by the social exclusion, their human counterparts were rightly confused and annoyed.

After a quick call to the Moreland Council, who don't seem to get into the weeds too much over the philosophical implications of the commons dilemma, it was reiterated that it is a 'shared space', but that comes with some relevant clauses for dog owners:

They must be on a leash within:

- 1m of shared pathways
- 15m of playgrounds and children's play equipment

- 15m of the principal location of an organised sporting or community event or festival

This last clause appeared to raise confusion in this particular case, as the cricket coaches believed this to mean the entire oval was out of use if any part was being used for training.

The council's position is that the principal location is defined as the actual location of any training or sporting events, unless the group has formally booked the entire oval. When asked how members of the public would know if the space had been booked, the advice was that "the person who has booked will tell you" and that there is no publicly available booking calendar or schedule.

So far, the result for this park has been that the sports club sectioned half of the oval off with some cones – a compromise many dog walkers were very happy with. Some dogs were contacted for comment but at the time of print had not yet responded.

For more information on dog off-leash areas and council laws surrounding dog walking, visit the Council website!

*By Joyce Brinkley*



## WHO IS TO BLAME? LOCAL REFLECTIONS ON THE LXRP PROJECT

The Moreland to Bell SkyRail project being completed by the Level Crossing Removal Project has seen its fair share of controversy, with widespread clear-felling of trees including the beloved Gandolfo Gardens, destruction of heritage elements including the historic Signal Box at Coburg Station, and a farcical community consultation process.

More recently, the LXRP has come under fire for excruciating noise levels generated from its 24/7 works, which disrupted the sleep, lives and overall wellbeing of those living near the line. Although the LXRP finally announced the cessation of 24/7 works, annoyed residents near Moreland Station have noted the continuation of night-time works and accompanying noise. Local group Sleepless In Moreland wants to know: Why have residents of Brunswick and Coburg been treated like 'second-class citizens' by the LXRP in terms of relocation and respite from protracted and clearly excessive noise?

The LXRP has been secretive about the exact criteria for eligibility for relocation, with information nowhere to be found on its website. Representatives of the Project Alliance refused to furnish specific information at a recent Stakeholder Liaison Group meeting, instead giving a vague and open-ended response that "Relocation and respite are not determined by a specific distance or exact measurement as noise can be at different levels at different locations on different days". However, LXRP representatives have stated that a mere 300 households living close to the line were considered 'eligible' for relocation - despite the noise being reported as far away as West Brunswick, North Coburg, Fawkner, Hadfield and even Preston!

By contrast, the way in which another major construction project is being handled, the Metro Tunnel, could not be more different. Information regarding relocation is publicly available and easy to find online. The criteria states that all residents who experience substantial and protracted increases in specific noise levels, within and outside their properties, are eligible, no matter how far they might be situated from the works. Con-

tractors are required to demonstrate compliance in terms of notification of residents and so forth, with the project overseen by Railway Projects Victoria and an independent body. Proposed noisy works are approved on a case-by-case basis, not given blanket approval. Contractors are formally required to rectify breaches of noise levels and to minimise noise at all stages of the works[4].

Strangely, the Environmental Protection Authority has denied responsibility for overseeing and regulating noise from the LXRP's endeavours in Moreland, on the grounds that it is a "government project". Faced with a large number of complaints from angry residents regarding noise, light and dust pollution, the EPA simply forwarded this information on to the LXRP. As of the time of writing this article, EPA staff repeatedly failed to return calls and emails from Sleepless In Moreland members. It would be interesting to find out who made the decision that Moreland residents could do without sleep for months on end.

*By Anonymous*



## ARTIST OF THE MONTH



*Aspect (Laneway)* 2019

Caitlin Phillips

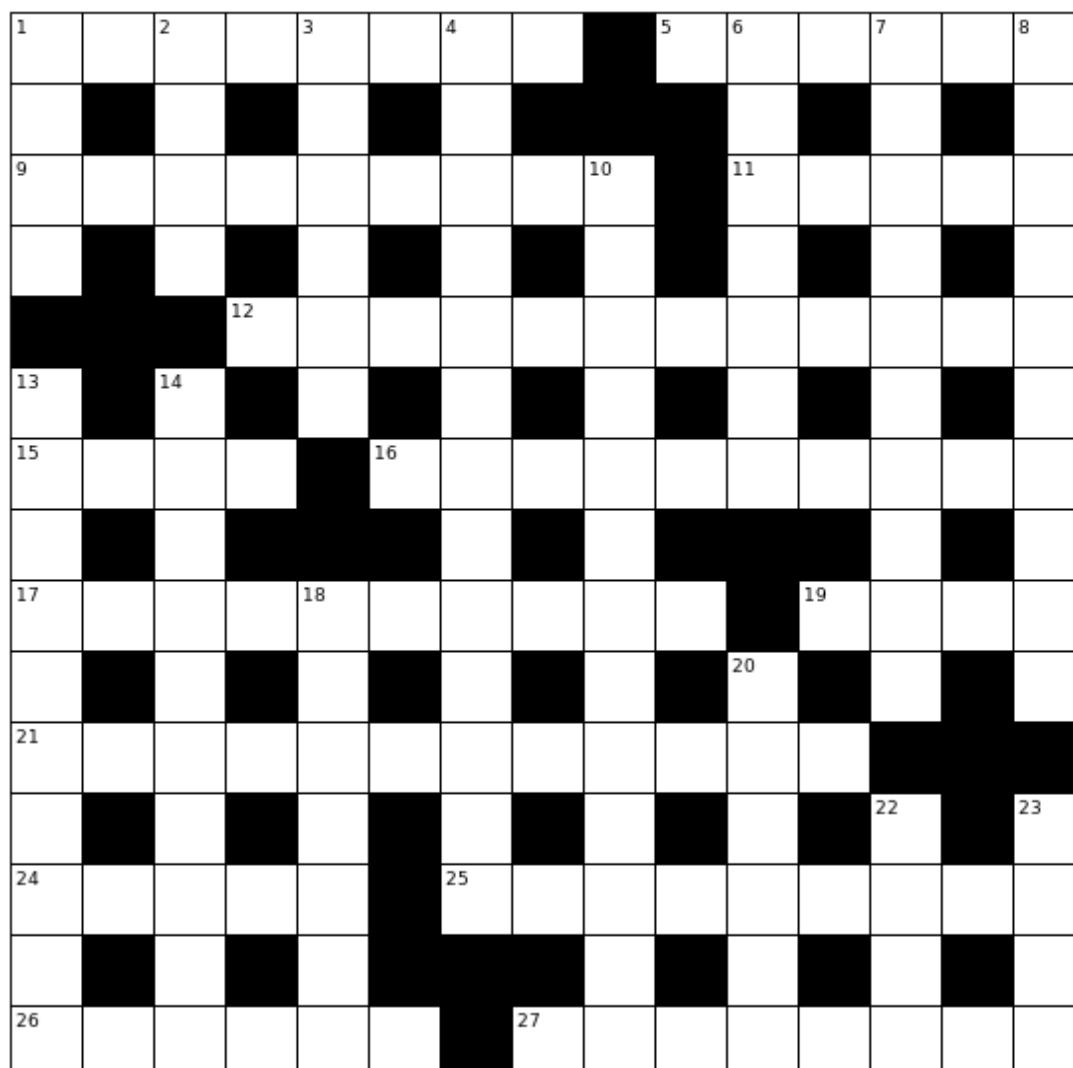
Acrylic, pencil and pastel on paper

Caitlin's works are available via Artbox Collective on artsy.

Artbox is a Coburg based group of collectors that supports a new contemporary artist every month with a commission of 50 signed and editioned artworks

# CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

By Henry Matheson



## ACROSS

1. Secure saucepan prior to get-together (8)
5. Cried, maybe, west of Spanish book (6)
9. Dishevelled peer loves to ignore alarm (9)
11. Spinach omelette contains cheese flavour (5)
12. Earthshaking undergarmed caused a great change (12)
15. Three-point answer's first again (4)
16. Honestly too good to rent? (5,5)
17. Frustrated, each tither utters this cry? (3,3,4)
19. Summits of alps look towards Otway ranges (4)
21. Renting to relatives who're leeching? (12)
24. Lost a son in Ceylon (2,3)
25. Overzealously educate on soup consumption? (5-4)
26. Democratic spiel managed to clear things up (6)
27. A vagrant's husband found in a place for old darts? (8)

## DOWN

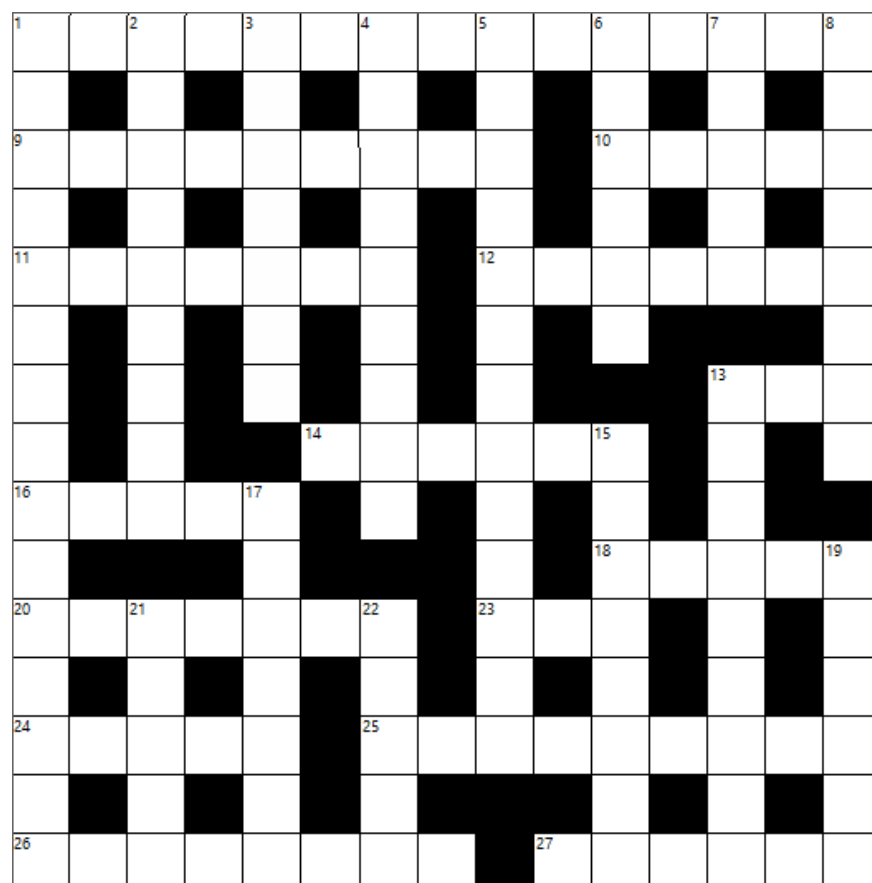
1. Front of cultivator swapping hands (4)
2. Cutesy communique without a tail (4)
3. Lassie's wandering hitching routes? (6)
4. Smile! Patty's making American food (13)
6. Bus I'm in crashed into undersea explorer (4-3)
7. Account for broken cacti inside with caution (10)
8. Type of sales found in two offices across the hall from each other? (4-2-4)
10. Broken divan as a topic of furnished getaway (4,9)
13. Ask tough questions of renting a houseboat? (10)
14. Pence, not rand upfront to rent common dwellings or fancier ones? (10)
18. "To wet your whistle, disguise the cost," he told me (7)
20. Sunk notable not wearing sable to straighten out (6)
22. Second video format's in testing (4)
23. Young 'uns don't lie for sums (4)

ANSWERS ON PAGE 12



# GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

By Ross Clark (@redchumpo)



## ACROSS

1. What is the first line of the chorus in Burns' song of nostalgia, sung around the Scots and English-speaking world on New Year's Eve? (3,4,4,4)
9. Who danced cheek to cheek with Chris de Burgh in 1986? (4,2,3)
10. What is the first name of the actor who played Stringer Bell in The Wire who is regularly tipped to take over the role of James Bond? (5)
11. Which Victorian town shares its name with a 19th Century Belgian King responsible for genocide in the Congo, while a Western Australian mountain range changed its name in 2020 in order to avoid association with his memory? (7)
12. Which body part is sliced up in Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali's 1929 film, Un Chien Andalou, as referenced in the Pixies' song Debaser? (7)
13. What was the ethnicity of the 5th century emperor, Attila, who captured much of Eastern Europe during his reign? (3)
14. What new attraction is due to open at Pentridge Prison in December 2020? (6)
16. What can be a part of a book, an

average of stock market prices, or a process used to increase search-engine efficiency? (5)

18. What is the first name of the political figure who sailed with Che Guevara on the Granma, and like Che was tattooed on the body of the late Diego Maradona (5)
20. Who, according to the Gospel of John, did Jesus raise from the dead shortly before his sister rubbed expensive perfume all over the prophet's dirty feet with her hair? (7)
23. Phonetically similar to the Scots-language word for 'hour', what is the German term for a watch or clock? (3)
24. Which type of odourless, colourless gas is a class of chemical element characterised by low chemical reactivity? (5)
25. The Cuban economy was based primarily on the export of what crop prior to the revolution of 1959? (4,5)
26. The Exorcist was announced by Rotten Tomatoes in October to be the \_\_\_\_\_ film of all time (8)
27. Which manufacturer, a subsidiary of Michigan's General Motors, shut down production in Victoria in 2017 and will be retired in 2021? (6)

## DOWN

1. Known as the Malvinas in Spanish, which offshore territory was invaded by Argentina in 1982? (8,7)
2. Jarvis Cocker and members from which band formed the Weird Sisters to perform at Harry Potter's school ball in the Goblet of Fire? (9)
3. What is the national animal of Scotland? (7)
4. Which blind crime-fighting lawyer in the Marvel Universe had his popular Netflix show cancelled in 2018 after three seasons? (9)
5. Which Belgian-born actor won an Academy Award for Roman Holiday (1953), and ten years later sang for JFK at his final birthday? (6,7)
6. Which German physicist (Hans \_\_\_\_\_) gives his name to an instrument that commonly measures radiation in nuclear facilities? (6)
7. Which Boonwurrung word when repeated was said by John Wedge (1856) to refer to a waterfall, and not the Birrarung River that now bears the name? (5)
8. According to the Herald Sun, the three main defining features of Ringwood include a Cadbury's factory, a few trashy nightclubs, and \_\_\_\_\_ (8)
13. What phrase was given by the late Diego Maradona to describe his first of two famous goals against England at the 1986 World Cup? (4,3,3)
15. In light of the Coronavirus pandemic, Victoria is now geared up for a summer of what type of dining? (2,6)
17. Who led the Persian forces at the Battle of Thermopylae (480BC), and was depicted by Rodrigo Santoro in the film '300'? (6,1)
19. What is the first name of the artist who became the first female to receive ten Grammy nominations and five wins in a single year, winning two of them for the number one hit Doo Wop (That Thing)? (6)
21. Based at De Cheyne Reserve, Coburg, the football team formerly known as Moreland Juventus now takes its name from which animal? (5)
22. Which surname links the 19th century investment banker who partnered Marcus Goldman, and the actor who played Manuel in Fawlty Towers? (5)

ANSWERS ON PAGE 9

## SHORT STORY OF THE MONTH

### The Holt Cycle

Holt was swimming one day when a rip caught his ankle. He tried to kick free, but the rip really had to insist. "Not today, rip," Holt said, "I have prime minister things to do." "I really must insist," the rip said. Holt realised the rip was as stubborn as a Russian diplomat and gave in. As he swept out he was overcome with a feeling of dread – he'd forgotten to lock his car.

\*\*\*

Holt came to on an island, the kind that are all surrounded by water. The trees were screaming, but it was just excitement and they soon stopped. He sat on the sand and tried to think about what to do. All he could think about was a joke someone had told him in the war. The punchline escaped him.

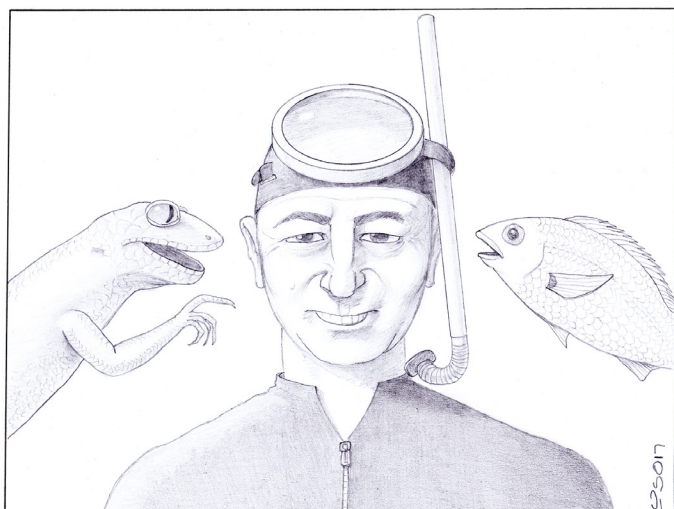


Illustration by Tyson Kalender (TheDrawingDroid)

\*\*\*

Years passed, then days, and months, in that order. Holt went insane from 1974-8 and again for most of the '80s, which admittedly was a strange decade for all of us. Eventually he settled into a rhythm, after his casino venture went bust due to low patronage. He often thought of home and wondered if they would let him be prime minister still if he went back.

\*\*\*

One day it rained birdseed. There were no birds on the island though, which seemed like a waste. Holt gave it a spirited try, but just couldn't get into the texture. To make matters worse, the beach looked like salt and pepper squid.

\*\*\*

In the centre of the island, Holt found a stone that told you the truth about yourself. He'd heard it from somewhere he couldn't remember. He knelt down, kissed the stone, and listened. An elemental voice said: "You exist between worlds and must pick one." "Don't you think I know that?" Holt said and kicked the stone. It split in two, revealing a small lizard. It added: "You look good in a brown cardigan but it doesn't suit these climes," and scurried off. "No doubt about that," Holt thought.

\*\*\*

Holt was fishing off a rock when he caught a fish. He was about to apply his bash and eat method to it when it spoke. "I've been caught by a magic human. Will you grant me three wishes?" "I thought fish were supposed to grant human wishes." "Nope. I'm not magic." "Neither am I. In fact, I was about to kill and eat you." "What if I told you something interesting? There's a stone on the middle of the island that will tell you the truth about yourself." This was news to Holt. "Interesting, I'll check it out, thank you". He weighed his options with the fish.

\*\*\*

Holt sat on the beach, sipping his claret and watching the sunset. He accidentally spilled his wine and the sky turned the colour of the claret on the sand. At first Holt was annoyed, because he couldn't see if he'd spilled any on himself, but eventually something softened. He gave up and dissolved into the sand with the claret, and when the tide came in it washed them both into the sea.

*By David Parsons*

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