



THE COBURG MEDDLER

THE BEST LAID PLANS EDITION

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Ballot papers were stolen in the Moreland Council 2020 election

This newspaper was written and developed on Wurundjeri Land of the Kulin Nation. Sovereignty has not been 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>

HARDING STREET BRIDGE UNDER THREAT

If you've never seen the bridge spanning the Merri Creek at De Chene Reserve, try not to use your imagination and you might just channel the designer. If you've managed to keep reading instead of banging your head against a wall, here's some worse news: you now have a good idea of the proposed design for replacing the suspension bridge at the end of Harding St, Coburg.

The Harding St bridge has a long and complex history involving many struggles, not least of which was the Great Feud of '84.

STORY CONTINUES PAGE 3

MORELAND COUNCIL SILENT ON DEMOCRATIC CONCERNS

On 25 March 2021 Cnr Milad El-Halabi was arrested by fraud squad detectives at his property in Pascoe Vale over allegations of making false documents.

For context, late last year it came to light that during the 2020 Moreland Council election period – which, due to COVID-19, utilised postal ballots – a candidate allegedly offered \$500 for every 50 ballot papers stolen from mail boxes in the North-East ward. These stolen ballot papers were then used to cast votes for the candidate responsible.

The ill-thought out scheme was, unsurprisingly, picked up by the Victorian Electoral Commission ('VEC'), as a lot of residents who did not receive their ballot paper (on account of it being pinched) were simply sent out a second ballot which they filled in. When the VEC noticed duplicated ballot papers with incorrect signatures, the fraud was discovered. The VEC immediately referred the matter to the Victoria Police and the election results for the North-West ward were referred to VCAT to see whether a re-election was required for the whole ward.

STORY CONTINUES PAGE 3

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

PULFORD INTRODUCES MOTION TO SUPPORT LOCAL NEWS

In a show of support for local news, Cnr Adam Pulford introduced a motion in the March Council meeting to create funding specifically to encourage and strengthen local news. Cnr Pulford mentioned the Coburg Meddler personally in his speech, which elicited an excited double-take from the Meddler team. We want to thank Cnr Pulford for his vote of confidence in the journalism that the Meddler and other local news groups are producing.

OPEN MIC NIGHT

Feminista Vinyl, Coburg's local record store and friendly hang out spot, is hosting monthly open mic afternoons. A gold coin donation will grant you access to the vulnerable and sincere sounds of your local neighbourhood. For the instrumentless-aspirational musicians, there is an amp, electric guitar, keyboard and accordion patiently waiting to be played. Shows are on the last Sunday of every month; more details are available on their social media accounts.

WELCOME PASA EATERY

Previously the site of well-loved Rubys Cafe, 138 Nicholson St, Coburg is now home to the recently opened Pasa Eatery. Pasa Eatery has taken the time to understand the community and is remaining pet friendly with a good selection of vegan options.

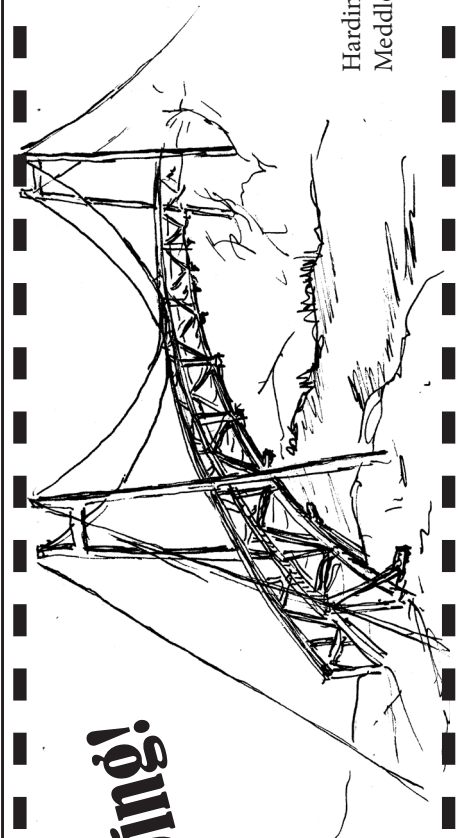
SUNSET IN PARK UNBEARABLE

The placement of the lime green table tennis table at the new Bulleke-Bek Park creates unbearable playing conditions for those wishing to practice their attacking chopper moves at sunset. Whoever placed the table so that it points east to west either despises table tennis players, or is finally looking for an upper hand in their own games. The rest of the park is quite something though.

APRIL OFFICIALLY VOTED CRUELLEST MONTH BY LOCALS

CONTAMINATED SOIL NEAR COBURG STATION

On 31st March, the CFMEU attended a worksite of the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRP) to demand that a new soil test be conducted because the LXRP dug up a mountain of soil that the workers suspected was contaminated. Whilst the findings showed contaminants were present, the workers' main concerns involved the presence of certain contaminants (PFAs) which, thankfully, did not show up in the tests. Because of the presence of some contaminants in the soil, however, the LXRP did agree to cover the pile of soil in an effort to prevent the spread of potentially harmful pollutants. This isn't the first time that John Holland, the construction group hired for the LXRP's construction jobs, has been accused of failing their workers during the work in Coburg and Moreland.



Hardington Street Suspension Bridge
Meddler Bookmark Series #01

Keep the suspense going!

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

MORELAND COUNCIL SILENT ON DEMOCRATIC CONCERNS

The elephant in the room at the April Council meeting was El-Halabi's continued presence. No mention of the arrest and the local's concerns of a potentially undemocratically elected councillor has been offered by Moreland Council. One would think that El-Halabi would try to assure the public, or respectfully stand down whilst investigations are ongoing.

In terms of the repercussions for El-Halabi if the allegations are found against him, under the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic), it is an indictable offence to interfere with material being sent or delivered to a voter by the VEC. The maximum prison sentence is 5 years. Under the same legislation, if El-Halabi is found guilty of this charge, then he will automatically be disqualified as a Councillor.

At this point, El-Halabi is still present at the

monthly Council meetings and helping to shape our municipality. Politically, El-Halabi represents developer interests in what is a very ideologically divided council where every proposal is hard fought. According to the legislation, Council proceedings are not invalidated because of any defect in the election or appointment of a Councillor. This means that the longer that this investigation drags on, the longer El-Halabi's potentially illegitimate and non-representational votes will continue to impact the municipality.

Whilst the charges are yet to be determined, there is still scope for the Moreland Council to deal with the public's concern. For example, it is within the power of the Moreland Council to apply to the Supreme Court to oust any person from Council if they believe that person holds their position contrary to the law. At the very least, Moreland Council should release a statement explaining why they haven't done so.

By SAS & BB

HARDING STREET BRIDGE UNDER THREAT

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Back in 1925 the first Harding Street Bridge was erected by private investors after the locals were unsuccessful in campaigning the Coburg and Preston Councils to fund it. The suspension bridge was utilised until 1983, when Coburg Council made the decision to demolish the bridge due to growing safety concerns. This caused outrage from the public and it sparked a bitter debate between the locals from the two neighbouring Councils over who should shoulder the costs. Both sides debated the shouldering of costs and the designs fiercely until a truce was struck between the two Councils and a replacement suspension bridge, mostly funded by Coburg Council, was erected.

Now, the suspension

bridge that was built during the tumultuous episode in Preston/Coburg relations is being threatened again, and the plan is to replace the ropey, springy path with a structure similar to the bridge at De Chene reserve.

The current suspension bridge was built in 1985 and according to a council engineer is "coming to the end of its life". Its proposed replacement is a truss bridge, which is apparently easier and cheaper to build and maintain. In addition to age, "the width is insufficient" a council spokesperson said.

What does it mean that the bridge is at the end of its life? The previous bridge, of which the current bridge closely resembles, was in use for almost 60 years. This current bridge has been reliably bouncing people across the creek for only 36 years.

Moreland BUG is understandably in favour of the proposal, which will allow bikes to cross the creek faster, and without the threat of having to dismount. The budget is \$3m split between the Darebin and Moreland councils but a council spokesperson said they were hoping to apply for state funding to expedite the process.

While the little bridge is a favourite amongst those who derive joy from jolting strangers as they make their way across the creek, it would surely be missed by even the joltees in the community.

We're also not sure if the council has a contingency plan for what might ensue. Last time the bridge was torn down, Coburg and Preston went to war. What are we in for this time?

By SAS

WHAT NEXT FOR 65 THE GROVE?

In January 2021, Moreland Council voted to refuse a planning application to demolish the dilapidated house at 65 The Grove, Coburg, and construct two, modern, double storey townhouses. The house has been left to rot over a period of 20 years.

The current owner of 18 years has ignored multiple council orders to bring the property up to scratch. During this time, an internal structural wall was removed at an unknown date causing serious structural damage, and in 2014, structural verandah piers were removed by an unknown culprit, causing the house's roof to collapse. After this point, the property was put into a state of serious disrepair. In their decision to refuse the demolition application, Councillors Conlan, Pulford, Panopoulos, Riley, Bolton and Davidson argued that the owner should not be rewarded with a planning permit for his wilful neglect of the property, refusing to reward 'demolition by neglect'. The brave decision was reported in The Age and

ABC Radio.

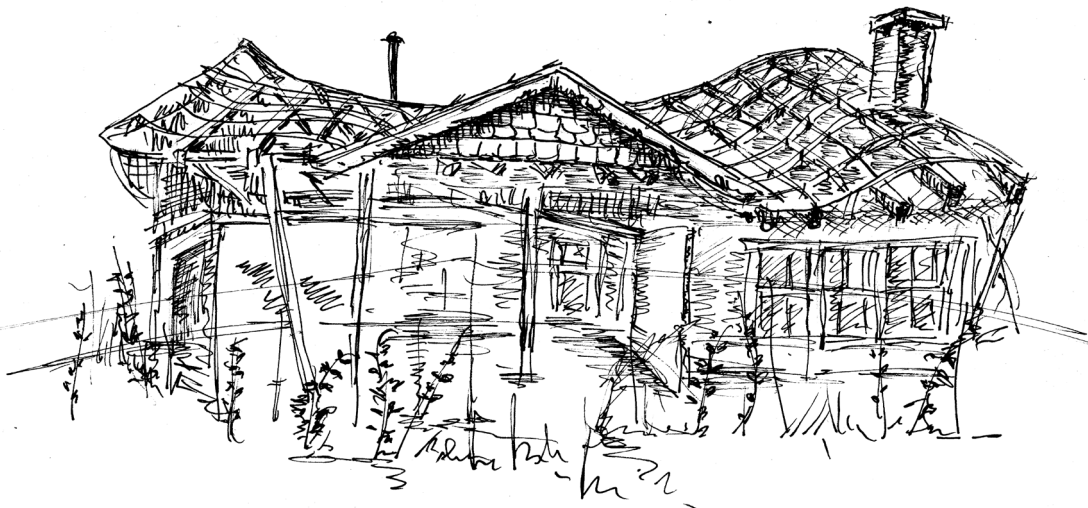
The question still remains: what should be done with a house that can't be salvaged or legally demolished?

Before answering this question, it's worth analysing how this situation occurred. Comparative to other countries, Australia's state and federal planning and heritage laws are weak. They have frequently enabled developers to buy historic buildings in order to let those buildings fall apart and consequently be rewarded with a development permit that makes them millions in windfall profits.

The illegal demolition of the 160 year old Corkman Inn in Parkville highlights just how weak our planning and heritage laws are. The owners of the pub, with knowledge of the laws, chose to demolish the building in broad daylight, simply factoring the fines into the cost of doing business.

Can you imagine a 19th century terrace on the Champs-Élysées in Paris slowly decaying over a few years, falling down, then the owner being rewarded with a permit by the city government to build a skyscraper on the site? No. This would not happen because the city has strict laws prohibiting this behaviour, carrying severe financial and legal penalties. This scenario is commonplace in Australia because our planning and heritage laws are deliberately weak- a result of politicians receiving substantial donations from property developers.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Victoria's Minister for Planning could discourage illegal demolition by imposing jail terms for those who deliberately and illegally demolish heritage buildings. To deter 'demolition by neglect', owners of heritage properties whose buildings collapse (from either neglect or design), could be refused from redeveloping the site, which could alternatively be acquired



by the state and handed back to the community for public use e.g. a park, community facility or other free, community use.

In the last few days it has come to light that the owner of 65 The Grove has appealed Moreland Council's decision to VCAT just before the 60 day appeal window lapsed. But the owner has arguably forfeited his right to own the historic property by deliberately ignoring council orders to fix it up and allowing it to fall apart. Thus, the site should now be returned to the community and converted into a public park.

While the property is privately owned and the land is zoned residential, which prohibits use for the purpose of a park, this is where Moreland Council could step in.

Councils are actively involved in the rezoning of land. They frequently begin the process through Planning Scheme Amendments, which allow council to change the planning rules of certain areas of land. While Planning Scheme Amendments must ultimately be approved by the Victorian Planning Minister – and could easily be refused – commencing this process signals the Council's intentions for how they want their land used and developed.

Moreland Council could start a Planning Scheme Amendment for 65 The Grove, which would involve applying a Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) to the site. A PAO would transfer ownership of the land into the Council's hands, removing the need for Council to purchase the private land from the owner.

As part of the Planning Scheme Amendment, council could also apply a Public Park and Recreation Zone to the site, which would allow the site to be converted to a public park. Council could begin the Planning Scheme Amendment process via a majority resolution at an Ordinary Council meeting, which would be followed by Council officers doing the administrative work to prepare the amendment, followed by a submission to the Victorian Planning Minister.

This might be seen as a radical idea. But so is illegally destroying the physical and social fabric of communities. The proposed public park is a proportionate response that would benefit the Moreland community and hopefully send a signal to other cowboy developers to respect people, history and planet.

By F Commons

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NGA CONFERENCE - MORELAND WANTS TO PARTY

From 20 to 23 June 2021 the Australian Local Government Association will be hosting the annual National General Assembly (NGA) at the National Convention Centre in Canberra. The purpose of the NGA is to identify and determine ways local government can engage with the Federal Government, to inform the development of national policy and influence the future direction of councils and communities.

The estimated cost for each Councillor interested in going is approximately \$2,500 per person. Councillors Tapinos and Yildiz wish to

keep the option open for any and all Councillors to make the trip for the conference if they want, however others in council are keen to limit numbers.

Cnr Riley mentioned that he wished all 11 Councillors would show this much interest in the local council convention run in Victoria twice a year.

BEING A LOCAL COUNCILLOR SHOULD BE A FULL-TIME JOB

The Moreland Council has their 'allowance' for the next four financial years fixed at \$31,444 for Councillors and \$100,434 the Mayor per annum.

Cnr Bolton recently argued that both the position of the Mayor and the Councillors should be pegged at the median Australian wage of \$49,805.00 for the Mayor and \$24,902.50 for Councillors. This figure is meant to represent the 'part-time' nature of a Councillor.

Indeed, most Councillors have full-time or part-time jobs, as the position of a Councillor does not pay the bills and expenses for people with families.

Having Councillor's wages set so low (with the exception of the highly sought after Mayoral position) is problematic.

Local council is the tier of government that is most intimately involved with and accessible by their constituents.

Although many areas of life are governed by state and federal laws, local governments have a surprisingly broad remit. The role of the Council as a whole is to provide good governance for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community. Council

can perform any duties or functions or exercise any powers conferred on it.

Because Councillors are required to remain employed whilst serving in office (as opposed to the other tiers of government) councillors lack the time and energy to think creatively and strategically about what they can do in their role and with their powers. Most months, Councillors are swamped by 300-page long agendas that they need to spend their spare time understanding and forming quick opinions on.

There is certainly an argument for keeping the Council truly representative of its constituents; working people juggling the pressures of life. However, most people work too much to consider taking on another job, especially taking on a role in a proactive and engaged way.

We should have a local government that can afford to pause, reflect and think seriously about the matters affecting their municipality. We want people who care deeply about local politics vying for a spot on Coun-

cil and we want to ensure that those committed candidates are not being prevented from running in the first place. We want parents, people with dependants, people with disabilities and people without jobs to be able to run for council. We also want young people to see local council as a valuable and valued role in society; not something that people can or should just do in their spare time.

In order to achieve this, we need Councillor's to do their work full-time.

You could be forgiven for thinking that the Moreland Council is fighting over scraps, but it is worth mentioning that the CEO of the Moreland Council can get upwards of \$360,001 per annum. Perhaps wages should be distributed more equally to cover an increased allowance for our elected representatives.

By Eddie Snagge

LOCAL ARTIST OF THE MONTH



Coburg Lake, 2021
Nadine Roseboom

Nadine is part of the Art Film Collective , described in more detail on page 10.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Updates on political activism within the community

Anti-Racism Conversations in Moreland

On 27 March, locals and concerned anti-racism advocates from surrounding suburbs met at the entrance of Bulleke-Bek park to discuss what should be done about the racist incidents in Moreland.

Prompting the meeting was an incident that occurred on Saturday 20 March, when a local resident spotted an extremely large piece of pro-Nazi graffiti along the upfield line in Brunswick. The resident reported the graffiti to Moreland Council and also rallied some friends together to try and paint over it herself.

The graffiti was completely removed three days after it was reported, as there was no way to get official action from VicTrack, who own the land around the Upfield Line, over the weekend. Cnr Sue Bolton encouraged the resident to organise the snap-action meeting,

and they both presented their opinions on the day. Cnr James Conlan, also in attendance, highlighted the inability of Council to act quickly in circumstances like this, but that a community task force could be created to unofficially paint over far-right and offensive graffiti.

The racist graffiti seems to be a direct response to the 'antifa' (the name of an anti-fascism group) mural that had been painted on that part of the wall recently. After the racist graffiti was completed, 7 individuals were photographed in front of the work. Apparently the group responsible had donned KKK robes whilst in Brunswick.

Participants also talked about the need to be on high alert for the 'entry point' issues for the far-right, such as anti-vax and anti-lockdown rhetoric, which can capture the attention of a broader audience that have not yet ascribed to broader

far-right ideologies. The point was also raised that anti-semitism has been increasing in surrounding suburbs and that this was in large part due to the shifting dialogue of the far-right in the United States.

Relatedly, the Alevi community in Coburg has complained of growing antagonism from racist groups after the Coburg Lake monument symbolising the suffering of the Alevis was repeatedly desecrated late last year.

Coburg has a long and proud history of anti-racism actions; if locals feel targeted and aggrieved by racism, reach out to the online community or to Cnrs Bolton and Conlan.

By SAS & BB

LOCAL POEM

i was sick of waiting
for people
i had yet to meet,
following lights
that led to darkness
so I chose a struggle

&the preciousness of my life,
believing the lie
whose colours i liked.
And with truth,
as my hobby
&hope

as a plan
I walk further into the unknown,
certain only
of what I do not want.

By Nico Lim (@_flashpoetry)

CONLAN ASKS DEVELOPER TO PUT THEIR MONEY WHERE THEIR MOUTH IS

In late March, Cnr James Conlan put pressure on the owner of a low-quality student accommodation building in Brunswick. The owner had asked to convert the 22 student apartments into a 'residential village'. The owner claimed that this was so that he could provide affordable housing to the community.

Concerned that this would allow other student housing operators to change their permit into

general accommodation and perpetuate the issue of sub-optimal housing, Cnr Conlan challenged the developer to agree to a condition whereby all the apartments were required to meet the statutory definition of 'affordable housing'. The developer agreed and the amendment was supported unanimously by the Moreland Council.

By Elena Snagge

WHY I LOVE VISITING MY GRANDMA

Every few months my mum and I, sometimes with my dad or a brother, jump in the car and drive to Adelaide to visit my last living grandparent, my grandma, who is now 94. While some people might find visiting a grandparent a tedious obligation, I look forward to it every time. I used to think that I didn't have much in common with my grandma; she likes crosswords and talking about people I don't know, rather than politics which is my favourite conversation topic. She dresses immaculately, while my clothes have holes and stains. Most of her family have voted Liberal her whole life, while I am an activist, sometimes living in blockades and wishing/fighting that the whole government representative democracy system we have will be turned on its head.

But as I spend more time with her I find our points in common. We both don't like shopping, we think politics is corrupted by money and ego, we love old trees, playing cards and sticking to our specific daily routines.

The thing I like the most about being with my grandma are the stories she tells me of what life was like for her generation, and her parents'

and grandparents' generations. What life was like for a woman back then, unquestioningly following and supporting a husband, working so hard without the modern conveniences of supermarkets, washing machines and automatic hot water. What it was like to live during the Second World War, how they did so many things before plastics and mobile phones. I can read these things in books and see them in movies, but it isn't the same as hearing them from my grandma.

Talking to her also helps me understand my mum better, and myself. It helps me understand my place as a descendant of Cornish, English and Scottish settler colonists of the 1800s in South Australia, which I am finding a hugely important part of the self reflection needed to support First Nations led struggles and decolonisation.

So, I highly recommend a visit to your old relatives if that's possible for you, and see what stories you can learn about your history.

By Anisa Rogers

LESSER KNOWN LIMERICKS

There once was a grape on a vine
Who soaked up the rain and sunshine
It was so full to burst
And those with a thirst
Held out their glasses for wine

By Paul Behrer

In the land of the humble Queen Stoa
Her subjects all learn how to float
Bridge closed to her castle?
Never a hassle
For they mostly swim over the moat

By Paul Behrer & Denim Owl



DR OKEY DOKEY MD

Local clown doctor answers your medical questions.

What happens if you clean out your ears too much?

Once upon a time there was a small rat with a penchant for the caress of a cotton tip. And all that happened is that rat was a very good friend and lover, because they listened very carefully and thoughtfully to everything anyone said. The End.

THE ARTIST FILM WORKSHOP OPENS IN BRUNSWICK

The Artist Film Workshop (AFW) – an artist-run collective of analogue filmmakers – have recently moved their lab from Fitzroy to 5 Cross St, Brunswick. AFW members run public screenings and workshops, as well as producing collaborative and independent projects that screen globally. Although they are currently in the final stages of setting up the lab, they expect to resume their program of public screenings in the latter part of 2021, providing locals with the rare opportunity to see film projected live.

If you are interested in learning more about film cameras or processing, or you just want to find a group of like-minded locals, feel free to contact them at <http://www.artistfilmworkshop.org/about> or on Instagram @artistfilmworkshop.



'Window' is a collaborative film project by @artistfilmworkshop made in response to the first pandemic lockdown. And our first on-line project!

- AFW

SLOW ART COLLECTIVE AT NECCHI

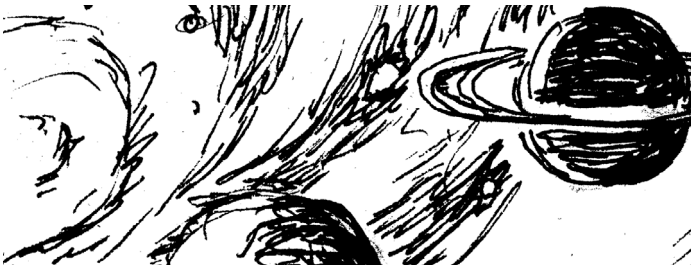


In early March, the Coburg NECCHI Neighbourhood House hosted a massive colourful interactive installation by the Slow Art Collective. The installation encouraged locals to come and participate by weaving and braiding and attaching their own sections. This is a true community effort aimed at challenging the chasm that can exist between artist and viewer.

On the launch day there was a drummer sitting inside making a dance-y beat and natural flower dying for participants with a t-shirt to spare.

NECCHI Neighbourhood house in Coburg (there's one in Newlands, too) is a community hub with a goal to create a supportive, responsive and creative space for all members of the community. They have regular events running year round, such as Queers Draw This, Tech Help, walks around the Merri Creek, Tai Chi and Community Cooking days. Check out their website www.necchi.org for their schedule and get involved.

By SAS & BB



WHAT'S UP?

April 23rd is a noteworthy date for meteor-spotters: two different meteor showers will be at their peak. The Lyrids will be seen low in the northern sky in the constellation Lyra, near the brilliant star Vega, with peak rates of meteors occurring in the morning hours of the 22nd and 23rd. The pi-Puppids originate in the southern constellation Puppis, south of the brightest star, Sirius, and peak time will be in the pre-midnight hours of the 23rd. While each of these showers can be spectacular at their peak, this may only last for an hour or so. Furthermore, the gibbous Moon will provide an unwelcome source of light distraction until moonset (00:39 am on the 22nd, 1:47 on the 23rd).

On April 27th Mars will join M35, a cluster of hundreds of stars, which, under good viewing conditions, can be seen to be a group with the unaided eye. Look in the north-west sky after sunset. Then turn to the east, to view the full Moon rising as a supermoon.

May 7th brings a chance to see the peak of yet another meteor shower, the eta-Aquarids in Aquarius. These are the debris from Halley's Comet, and promise to be spectacular and prolific: fast, bright yellow, and with up to sixty per hour. Best viewing time will be just before dawn, say 5:30 am, when Aquarius will be overhead.

In the traditions of the Australian Aboriginal people, meteors are often associated with serpents, evil magic, omens of death, and punishment for breaking laws. In Torres Strait, the Meriam Mir people see meteors, called Maier, as the souls of the recently deceased, on their way to the Land of the Dead. When a person dies, their spirit is taken to the top of the tallest palm tree, which is set alight, and the spirit is launched on its way. The resulting Maier's trajectory and brightness suggests where the dead person came from, and how important they were.

A striking line-up in the sky may be seen, briefly, in the twilight of May 13th, as Venus, a very

new Moon, and Mercury line up in the northwest, just below the V-shaped Hyades. Look to the horizon between 5:30 pm and 6, when they set. This tableau is easily missed, but will be repeated over the next few nights, with the Moon gaining in height and phase. On May 15th the Moon will be next to the M35 cluster mentioned above, and on the 16th, it will be next to red Mars in Gemini, with the twin stars Castor and Pollux nearby.

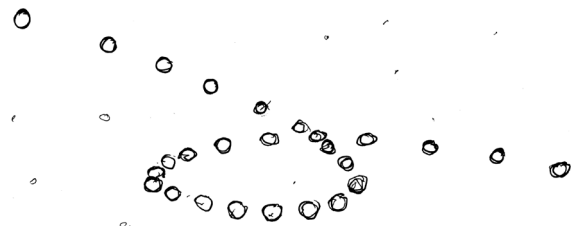


Image: Retrograde motion of a planet

At this time, Venus will be heading away from the Sun and remaining longer in the evening sky, but Mercury will be heading back towards the Sun, and at 6pm in the May 29th twilight, the two planets will pass each other, separated by less than 1° .

The yellowish gas giant Saturn, with orange Jupiter below, may be seen during May after midnight, in Aquarius in the eastern night sky. On May 30th, the Moon, slightly past full, will draw near Saturn, and two nights later, will be next to Jupiter.

The outer planets move a little each night against the backdrop of stars, usually shifting from west to east. On May 24th, Saturn will stop moving- and on the following nights its path will be a u-turn, after which it will travel counter to the usual direction for a few months. Western astronomers explain this retrograde motion of the planets in terms of differing radial velocities. For Aboriginal people, the path that the Sun, Moon, and planets travelled along the zodiac was often regarded as a road for primary ancestor spirits. In the traditions of the Wardaman people of Northern Australia, Uncle Bill Yidumduma Harney, an elder, describes the planets with their retrograde motion as ancestral beings walking along this road, sometimes slowing down or stopping, and then coming back for another yarn with other ancestors, before moving on again.

By Vlack

FLAVOURS OF COBURG

Bluestone American BBQ

Our society seems to have restarted itself; curfews are over, businesses are open and returning to an office-based workday is the new normal for many. With this 'return to normal' comes the very normal feeling of 'I can't be bothered cooking'. Such was the feeling my wife had after a gruelling day in the office, which led to the following text:

A link to Bluestone American BBQ with the simple phrase, 'I want this'.

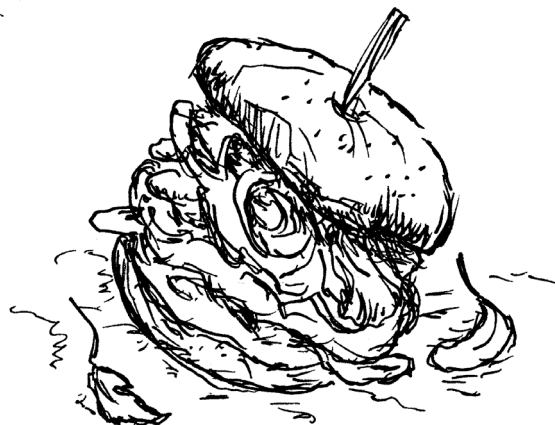
I was stoked. I hadn't had the opportunity to try this restaurant for various reasons, the main one being the economic/pandemic crisis. I was equally excited to answer the age-old question, does American BBQ travel well? We may be allowed to go out for dinner nowadays, but maybe we don't have to.

Thankfully, Bluestone American BBQ travels well. Very well indeed. For myself, I ordered their Chopped Brisket Burger with a side of Mac and Cheese and Corn Bread. My wife settled on the classic Double Smoked Brisket with Tangy Creole Slaw. On reflection, we ordered a lot of brisket. It was great, but it was a lot.

The Brisket Burger was one of the best burgers I've had in a long time, and like most middle-class white men, I consider myself a burger fanatic that understands the artistry of the buns like no other. The burger consists of mac and cheese, slaw, dill pickle, lettuce, mayo, brioche bun and chopped brisket.

This seems like a simple recipe for a burger, with the mac and cheese added as a flourish. But the mixture of ingredients compliment each other in the best way. The richness of the cheese coupled with saltiness of the brisket was the bulk of the flavour profile, with their good friend slaw and pickle working overtime to balance out the bite, with a tang only they could provide. And mayo was there, too. The brisket itself, while already chopped up, still had that pull apart characteristic that it's known for.

There's an element of the burger that people tend to forget about: a burger can taste amazing but turn to mush in your mouth. This was not a problem here. Yes, the brisket and mac and cheese were a soft and gooey partnership, but the pickle



had a thickness to it that provided a satisfying crunch when you bit into it. The slaw supported its good friend the pickle in The Great Resistance to my brazen attack of its home, the brioche bun.

I feel at this point I need to point out that everything that was in this burger we also incidentally ordered as sides, so you can take my word that were you to deconstruct this burger and eat its components separately, you'd also have a solid meal.

Afterwards, I was satisfied and content. I deem this burger: damn good.

By Matthew Boehm

Bluestone American BBQ

470 Sydney Rd, Coburg

0410 842 088

S	E	O	H	S	O	N		U	V	D	N	V	P	S
H				E		V		V		T		V		E
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X	X	E	S	O	O	T	M	I		E	S	R	U	N
		R				T		W		M				I
D	N	V	T	T	R	O	P		R	E	K	C	U	T
N		H		N				S				E		S
V	T	O	K	V	D	H	T	U	O	S		S	T	V
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N		V	A	G	I	H	C	I	M	T	O	R	T	D

GHOST STORY

Local writer, Gwendalyn Kneebone, has started documenting her memories of Coburg during the 1950s and 60s. This story is a postscript to Paddy Egan's Dog, a poem publish in Issue 7.

The material for a story can come through the back door more often than from that so-called light bulb moment we writers covet.

If the clinging cliches can be unpinned most tales are plain and plain language tells them best.

My mother was kind. She welcomed post-war arrivals to the street. She swapped local food for new recipes (parsley for Tabbouleh). She helped to fill out official forms which were never in plain English.

So her kindness led to closeness and disclosures.

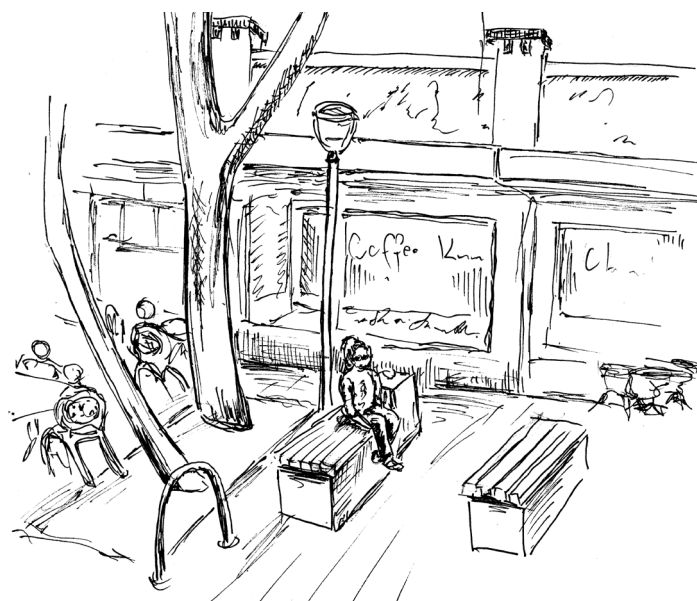
After Paddy Egan and family were no more, a new home was built two doors down. Very much a new monied brick pile that should have smothered history.

The new owner called a local priest for an exorcism.

She told my mother that her little girl reported seeing a woman weeping in her bedroom, on many nights. She also said that when the old house came down there were many large old bones under the old wood stove.

They may have been from the prison farm for the dog. Or not.

By Gwnedalyn Kneebone - as recalled



MALL-CONTENTS

Mak was sitting outside Chorba Cafe, a popular Turkish cafe in Victoria Mall. She was enjoying a coffee and a Turkish delight. Mak was generous enough to spend some time between sips to regale the Meddler with some stories.

MAK: I've lived all over Melbourne, but I was raised in Coburg. I've recently re-bought in Coburg, so I'm over the moon. My mum is 15 minutes away, my sister lives in Brunswick and my brother lives in Carlton. My son lives interstate and he has a beautiful young family; I'm a proud grandparent.

MEDDLER: Did you spend a lot of time in Coburg when you were young?

MAK: Yes. When we first immigrated from Turkey, we were all staying at the hostel in the old army barracks, and then we mainly lived in Coburg. We shared a house with another family and then we lived at Jewell Station at the flats there, and then we actually purchased our first house in Coburg. Now I have a big family, which I love. We're all spread out. That's just what happens with migrant families.

MEDDLER: What was it like growing up in Coburg?

MAK: I first started going to Coburg Primary and then I went to Brunswick Girls High. When we moved back to Coburg, I went to Newlands High. When we first moved here, the real estate agent gave us a little booklet explaining the cafes and stores in Coburg; she also told me about Chorba. It's beautiful, because it's my heritage. It's familiar. When we first came here, there were a lot of immigrants in the area. I experienced bullying at school because of my name; no one could pronounce it. When I started working in childcare,

where I've worked for 25 years, people started calling me 'Mak'. Which I thought was easier for people. I was originally named after my mum's first child who she lost to whooping cough.

MEDDLER: What changes have you noticed?

MAK: When I was young I was quite comfortable walking around. Me and my sister used to walk to school with no problems. I didn't remember seeing any homelessness or drug use, but now I see it. It's sad, but it's a part of life in this day and age. No one wants to be in that situation. I know it's because of their circumstances that they get pushed aside by their families.

I love all the stores that I used to come to, but I can see a lot of change and struggle, too. The small milk bar that we used to go to doesn't exist anymore because of bigger stores like Coles and Woolworths who are open 24/7. And now the cake store, Ferguson Plarre, has closed. But despite all this, I always feel home when I'm here.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

As a Coburg resident I must say I find your meddler quite interesting at times. But I have to say if you decide to criticize someone, please have the decency not to share very personal information that had nothing to do with the article. I'm sure you can work out what I'm talking about. If you had done that to me I would have sued your meddler. Meddling is one thing but giving personal family information is not on. Think wisely before you meddler with people's business next time.

Anonymous

MEDDLER'S THOUGHTS

Perhaps there are a number of people who share similar concerns about last edition's

front page article titled 'Crooked House - Demolition by Neglect or Design?'. In this article, we named the applicant of a demolition permit for a home on the Grove in Coburg that had a heritage protection. Not only did we name the applicant, but we also shared details about his character; namely, that he had been found guilty in court of both tax fraud and recently physically assaulting his parents.

The media's influence on the public's feelings about other people means that if journalists are reckless and vindictive, then they can have a hugely negative impact over people's lives.

It's not a very satisfying defense to claim that the information that we published was public knowledge, proven in a court of law. The Coburg Courier, which ran from x to z, was once in the habit of publishing the names and details of people

going through divorce proceedings in open court. The insidious outcome of which likely helped to keep unhappy partners trapped in unsatisfying or abusive marriages. Even though certain information is public, does not mean that journalists should still recklessly weaponise it against individuals.

Regardless, there are instances where a person's character and past crimes are relevant to a current question. Reasonable minds might disagree over whether our last edition's article crossed the line. We personally stand by it.

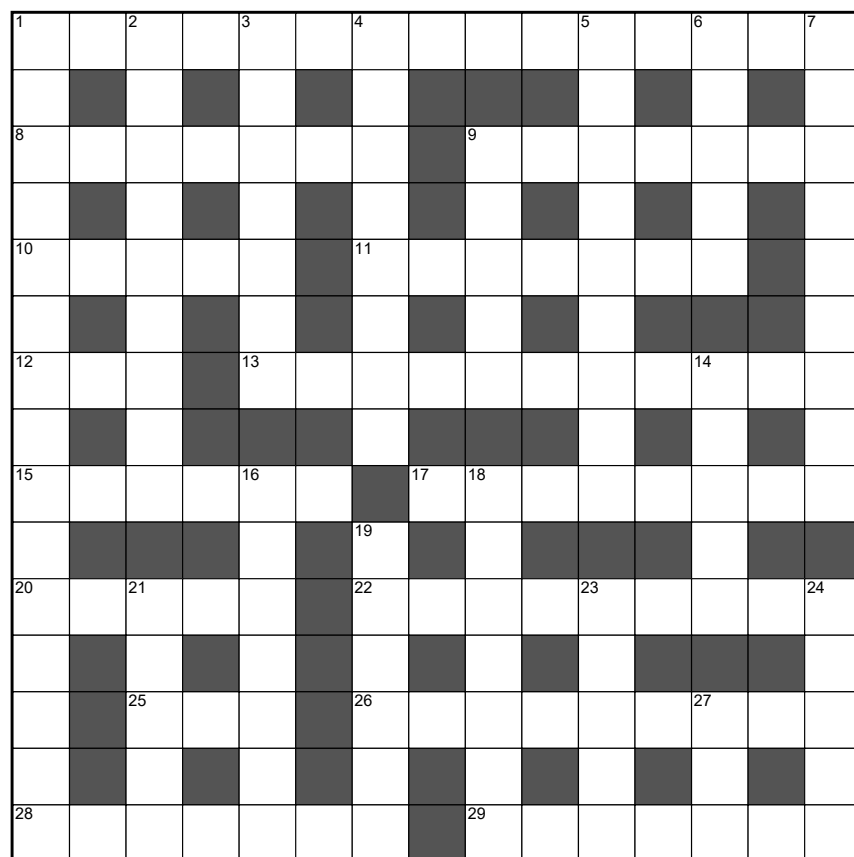
VERBAL COMMENTS TO THE EDITOR

"I'm sorry, but you should get a life".

Uncle P

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

By Ross Clark (@redchumpo)



ACROSS

1. In which city and state did Diego Rivera paint his Industry Murals depicting the production of Ford motor cars? (7, 8)
8. A Passage __, ____ - novel by EM Forster (1924) that helped win him a nomination for the Nobel Prize for Literature (2, 5)
9. Often dug up to be used as bait, what creature is usually known for the coiled castings it leaves on beaches around the world? (7)
10. Which Romanian former world #1 tennis player won Wimbledon in 2019? (5)
11. What is the northernmost country of Ireland? (7)
12. What condition, given here as an acronym, did people pour buckets of ice over themselves in aid of in the 2014 craze? (1,1,1)
13. In which US state is the popular abomination Mt Rushmore? (5, 6)
15. What Aussie slang word for food is also the name of the foulmouthed Scottish 'Director of Communications' in The Thick of It? (6)

17. What is the oldest European settlement in the state of Victoria? (8)

20. What was Florence Nightingale's day job? (5)
22. How does Right Said Fred identify himself in relation to Milan, your party and my hat? (2, 3, 4)
25. Who were Arabian Prince, Ice Cube, Dr Dre & Eazy-E? (1,1,1)
26. Which river in Western Victoria gives its name to the wars fought between Gunditjmara and British forces in the 1830s-1860s? (9)
26. Which prison in West Berlin housed Nazi officers after the war and lent its name to the 80s pop group who had a hit with 'Gold'? (7)
29. "No shirt, __ ____, no dice" - Fast Times at Ridgemont High (2, 5)

DOWN

1. What was the colonial name (1800-1949) of what is now known as Indonesia? (5, 4, 6)
2. What ingredient is common to a Sidicare, a Cosmopolitan and a Long Island Ice Tea? (5, 3)
3. Which mythological Greek King

brought disaster to his city after killing his father and marrying his mother? (7)

4. Also known as Jude, which of Jesus' twelve disciples shares a feast day with St Simon? (8)

5. Which Bafta-winning star of Four Weddings and a Funeral was once arrested for "lewd conduct" in Los Angeles? (4, 5)

6. Which David was reported by Stereogum in 2014 to be the third-richest drummer in the world after Ringo Starr and Phil Collins? (5)

7. Frances McDormand (Best Actress) and Chloé Zhang (Director) have been nominated for which film at the 2021 Oscars? (9)

9. What surname unites the director of Mulholland Drive with Ernesto 'Che' Guevara and his compatriot, the 80s pop singer Valeria? (5)

14. What Illinois Airport featured in the film Airplane! and was the world's busiest from 1963 to 1998? (5)

16. What city is home to the Wizard of Oz? (7)

18. What empire lasted over 600 years and ended the Byzantine Empire with their conquest of Constantinople? (7)

19. Who starred and directed the cult movie The Room? (6)

21. What is the first name of Rousey, the Olympic medallist in judo who later became the first female inducted into the UFC Hall of Fame? (5)

23. What are Shrek and Princess Fiona? (5)

24. What is the third word of the New York band fronted by Karen O who had hits with Maps and Heads Will Roll? (5)

27. The author of War & Peace and Anna Karenina is usually known by what first name in English? (3)

ANSWERS ON PAGE 12

LOCAL SHORT STORY OF THE MONTH

In the early days of our lockdown-meltdown, I wrote this, but failed to send or deliver it immediately. Within days many of my fellow travellers had acted delightfully in a similar vein, making this passé. I will argue that some of my more serious thoughts in this hurtle of nonsense continue to be relevant.

PRESS RELEASE

VIRUS ZOMBIE

March (in July) of the VIRUS ZOMBIE (a notification of a demonstration)

On Saturday July 25th 2020 at 11am, there will be an outrageous demonstration by one local ratbag at the Sydney Rd/Albert St intersection in Brunswick, offering mirth & nonsense as an antidote to the Pandemic Panic. The VIRUS ZOMBIE will be wearing an industrial level Fume Mask (recycled from spraying woodwork), a clear label, & marching with a slightly strange gait!

This ECCENTRIC BOHEMIAN is crushed almost lifeless by what can be cast as illogical arithmetical projections which demolished the capacity to travel to the wilderness of Marysville, chasing those yummy, introduced trout. The willingness of trout to be caught & cooked is precisely seasonal & cannot be deferred!

The nonsense aspect of this protest is believed to be caused by a recurring infiltration of the little hero ALICE, read nightly to sooth the anxieties. While this outburst against authoritarianism may lead to arrest & imprisonment, the ZOMBIE has prior agreement that no-one will pay the bail, producing some time in the LOCKUP! This might lead to an innovative literacy program for prisoners & their guards, (police persons may apply for inclusion), & virus verse is likely to emanate. While these dark days will possibly lead to the extinction of humanity by Xmas, that could be environmentally beneficial (& those trout will be delighted).

“Always look on the bright side as well” shouts this hopeful descendant.



Illustration by Tyson Kalender (TheDrawingDroid on Etsy)

VIRUS, VIRUS, BURNING BRIGHT
CUTS ALL FREEDOM & THE LIGHT
BUT NONSENSE SALVAGES DELIGHT
LET US UNITE, EVEN IN FRIGHT!

[name & addressed cannot be discerned]

(my most serious concern involves mathematical projection of data - the logic can be indicated:

If no-one died yesterday from falling trout, & never has before, but someone appears to have suffered that unpleasant ending this afternoon, that is a zillion % increase! With careful digital projection of that frightening data dynamic it can be alarmingly expected that we will all be dead by Tuesday ...)

By Ken Taylor

*Send us any feedback and criticisms.
email: thecoburgmeddler@gmail.com*

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