



FOREST HILL HAPPENINGS

No 42

President: Stuart Williams

03 June 2020

STU'S SCRIPT

Well winter really did decide to make her mark. Cold, damp conditions make being inside quite OK. We have started to get used to Zooming. Thanks to all for making an effort to join us last Monday.

Rotary certainly is and has been involved in so many impressive 'Health' projects. Shelley gave us an impressive presentation on fighting Malaria. She got through it in record time but did not miss any facts. Thanks, Ron, for getting us another illuminating guest speaker.

A big congratulations to Bob Laslett for reaching a birthday milestone on 3 June. Bob has been an excellent secretary for me and previous presidents. Bob's contribution to Rotary International has been huge. We were proud to have Bob as a District Governor all those years ago. Forest Hill Rotarians still talk fondly of Bob's Conference held at Ballarat as being the biggest, best and friendliest. Today's District Governors could only dream of having 1,300 attend their conferences. Happy Birthday Bob.

It was good to have Ray Smith join us again on Zoom. After discussions with Ivan at Bucatini we hope to resume meetings on 22 June. We will now start to plan our Changeover dinner in the restaurant for 29 June.

There will be a Whitehorse Farmers Market on Sunday 14 June.

Our Footy tipping Competition- Kickgoals20, will return next week.

Our club will be managing and conducting the Blackburn Craft Market on Saturday 13 June. Our stall-holders are very enthusiastic. Let's hope the weather is kind to us. We will promote Rotary and our club on that date. Due to social distancing requirements we will not be conducting a sausage sizzle.

Stay healthy, stay warm, stay safe.



Stuart

COVID-19 is getting to me!!

NEXT MEETING

Note: No meeting on 8th June.

Two meetings this week.

Monday 15th June: 7.00pm in the Zoom Room. (Club Meeting)

7.40pm in the Zoom Room. (Guest Speaker – Peter Hitchener “The Golden Days of Television”)

Links for both meetings have been sent. Please make sure you use the correct link for each meeting. Contact me if you have any problems.

Bill

Our speaker on the 22nd June will be Richard Paterson from the World Literacy Foundation.

CELEBRATIONS

Three big events this week.

June 4 sees Bob Laslett crack the champagne for his birthday. Have a great day, Bob.

June 5 sees Ron Brooks looking over his shoulder wondering where the 31 years have gone since he joined our club.

June 6 sees Bob & Barb Williams getting together with family and friends to celebrate their wedding anniversary. Congratulations from all of us.



KEEP SMILING!!!

Just a few memories of teaching in Technical Schools.

Just as Bill mentioned about his teaching last week, I had 37 years of enjoyable and challenging times during my career. My first appointment was to Kangaroo Flat Technical School.

I had 44 students in my English class and for one period a week- composition- , only 22 students. I consequently lead a fairly monastic life, staying home and preparing lessons and assessing student's work every night.

We played cricket against the students in a student v teacher game. When I came into bat at number four, I took the first four balls in the middle of my back. These games were a chance for the students to "get back at the teachers". One of my tall, fit year eleven students I found out later was the opening fast bowler for Premier side, Sandhurst.

1968: I was transferred to Oakleigh Tech. so that I could continue studying at Monash. The school was situated on the corner of Poath Rd and North Rd. It was a normal suburban tech school. Of course we had some delinquent students. Some were not too smart. For a few weeks there were house robberies around the school at lunch-time. The police came and got the offenders. They carried out the robberies with their school jumpers on.

1969: I took up my position at Collingwood Tech. in February 1969. I was second in-charge to Peter Scott and was in charge of the English subject teachers. It was an eye-opener for me. Children arriving at school without breakfast and having a hot dog and Coke. Some of the kids were little toughies but the majority wanted to learn. At times one of Mike Tyson's maxims seemed to fit many of the boys I taught. "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth." Many of the boys at CTC preferred to fight rather than negotiate. I know we talked in the staff room-"Are we just making some of the boys more educated criminals?" There was a time when we broke up a pimping ring. A couple of guys were taking bookings for sex with some of the girls at Collingwood High School.

One Monday morning, at about 8.30am there was a knock on my office door. I invited a very teary Jeanne into my office. She said: "The police came to our flat on Saturday and arrested my husband on the charge of incest." I offered her another clean handkerchief as my mind went into overdrive. Incest- what the hell is incest? I had heard the word but nothing in my life up until then had prepared me for this. I reached out, gave her a hug and she wept on my shoulder. She then said she was not sure she could continue to teach her classes. She then said, "When I was out at Pentridge on Sunday visiting my husband two boys from my classes said -"What are you doing here Miss? I'm here to visit my dad." I was able to support Jeanne. She continued to teach. Inner suburban Collingwood, Fitzroy, Carlton and Richmond were very different to eastern suburban Burwood. We had many Greek and Italian students.

The more I got to know the students the more I admired their efforts to learn. I was insisting on some work to be done at home. Many boys explained to me they lived in small, crowded houses or flats. The only place they could study or do school work was on the kitchen table. So they had to work around food preparation and eating dinner. Other students, every night walked into the Melbourne library and studied there. I organised some excursions to live theatre. I remember one student coming to Her Majesty Theatre in winter, in shorts and thongs. No socks.

One day after class I was sitting at the table checking my roll. I was aware a student was standing beside me. Mark was a big boy, he was absent two to three days a week.

I was always warning him, cajoling him and having to report him to the administration. Mark came to school every day of the year in shorts and thongs. I acknowledged him and he said, "Mr Williams, how do you apply for a home loan?" I covered many topics during my lessons- car safety, hire purchase, borrowing money etc. I asked Mark why. Mark brought me to tears when he said, "I want to buy a home for my mother. She has looked after us so well. Sir, I miss school so often because I have to sell newspapers on the street to give my family some money. I have saved a lot of money and I wonder how much money I need as a deposit." Here was a kid that I thought was lazy and unreliable. We had a long talk.

A very powerful and positive memory from the end of that year was speech night at the impressive Collingwood Town Hall. One of my English teachers, Eric Aspinall had a beautiful strong baritone voice. The hall went dark and Eric gave a magnificent rendition of "Holy City". Unforgettable.

1971: I remained as Head of Department for 1971. It did not get an easier. I learnt a lot about human nature. I had less trouble with the students than I did with the staff. I was astounded when one staff member, an ex-soldier, reported to me that he had his wallet stolen while he was in the class-room. I investigated and discovered he had fallen asleep at his table. A student had crawled along the floor, out to the front and taken the teacher's wallet out of his bag that was under the table. Another time I was told that a whole set of class texts had gone missing. My school intelligence had informed me that they had been hidden in a few student lockers. We searched all the lockers and found the books. One student had thought if they removed the books the teacher would not be able to give them a test on that topic. I had other staff who disappeared every Friday afternoon. Sometimes they had scheduled classes so I had to cover their classes with another teacher.

Stuart



Does your life feel like this some days?

Bucatini's are great supporters of our club - SUPPORT THEM!

Bucatini Restaurant

454 Whitehorse Road, Mitcham

Now open

Wednesday to Saturday each week

5pm to 9pm

And also Sunday 12 noon to 2.30pm

Bucatini a la carte menu

Take Away Only

Please phone 9873 0268