



# FOREST HILL HAPPENINGS

No 41

President: Stuart Williams

27 May 2020

## STU'S SCRIPT

The Rotary year is quickly coming to an end. Over the last 3 months we have experienced Rotary in a very different form. We have all come through the challenges thrown at us. Our Rotary District is currently training “remotely” next year’s office – bearers. We have not spent as much money as normal but also, we have not raised as much as usual. This COVID situation has shown all of us that we must have a good financial buffer to make sure we can weather any “stuff” that gets thrown at us.

I would like to thank the club for endorsing the idea that we the donate US\$100 by 14 members – to End Polio Now. That probably comes to approx.AUD \$2,100. After 35 years we can be proud of our efforts (The whole Rotary World) in almost eliminating Polio from the face of the earth. That huge battle has given Rotarians a window into the task the world is currently facing attempting to fight a new and rampant, aggressive virus.

Secondly, I am sure the Interplast committee will be able to utilize the \$500 the club will forward to Interplast for them to continue to make a difference to the lives of so many people.

A quick up-date on some of our COVID-19 correspondents. Alberto in Italy posted photos of two of the happiest children I have seen for a while. His family were allowed outside for the first time in 3 months. Another District 9810 past exchange student from Argentina, Victoria, with her young daughter, yesterday ended 69 days of quarantine. Our lockdown, with the ability to get out for only 4 reasons was “soft” compared to quarantine.

While going through some family papers I came across information my mother had written. Many people have compared our 2020 experience with the war experience. “I don’t think so.” My dad was posted to New Guinea in 1941. The troop ship sailed from Sydney with 600 Army personnel on board. Keith and two other Signal Corps men were put off at Port Moresby and the ship went on to Rabaul. The ship never landed, as it was bombed entering the harbour and all 597 men were killed. (I had never been told that story by my father). He had 16 bouts of Malaria, Dysentery, and Dengue Fever so was sent home for a break in April, 1944. Mum and Dad were married on April 26<sup>th</sup>-mum was 20 years of age. He was sent back to New Guinea at the end of May. He was then involved in the landing on Borneo. That entailed wading through the water and facing the Japanese in the jungle. Some of his mates, right next to him, were killed in the water by gun-fire. (I had never been told that either- Dad just was not keen to talk about his war experience). I was born in February 1945. Dad did not see me until I was one year old. Mum stayed with her mother and her sister all through this time.

Delighted that Glenys has been able to process an application for NYSF from Ruyi. She looks, according to her paper-work, an outstanding young woman. Fingers crossed Ruyi impresses the selection panel and can have a wonderful, challenging experience in Canberra and go on to make her mark on the world in the future.

I will be contacting Footy Tipping members this week to make sure we are ready for the season to re-start. The “Couldabeen Brothers” often say ‘when too much footy is never enough’. Well many of us will be delighted just to have a little bit of footy. Will Bob be able to continue to wear his Demons cravat?

The document relating to – The future of Rotary—next 100 years is interesting reading and something I hope we, as a club, will respond to. Sue will drive this. Our club fits the evidence about membership. Losing members within 3 yrs of joining. I firmly believe RCFH does need to embrace change and be bold and make some changes. We need new members, younger members and we need to be appealing to new members.

It was good to know that Indi has been able to keep his business going through this pandemic.

We hope to soon be able to present a Certificate to Anat Bigos, the young woman we nominated for the Shine On Awards. Anat has compromised health so we must protect her and work out an appropriate way to get her citation to her.

Thanks Ron Brooks for your excellent job driving the UNICEF foreign Coin project. Often some of Rotary’s projects are simple ideas that grow and become so worthwhile.

Please put on your thinking caps as to how we can utilise our \$6,000 Whitehorse Farmers’ Market proceeds. I think our Blackburn Craft Market community, stall holders and shoppers, will appreciate our decision to conduct the market in June. Please assist John Mc Phee with the new arrangements we will have to implement to comply with COVID restrictions.

Thank you all for your commitment to Rotary this year. Thank you for hanging in there during this disruptive time. The restrictions definitely sapped our spirit and our energy. Our age profile understandably restricted what we could do. Member’s health MUST be a priority.

Enjoy this last bit of glorious late autumn weather in Melbourne.

Stuart

## **NEXT MEETING**

***Monday 1st June: 7.00pm in the Zoom Room. (Guest Speaker – Shelley Gurney)***

***7.40pm in the Zoom Room. (Club Meeting)***

***Two meetings this week.***

***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***

## “Farewell Joan, your work is done”



Robbie and I attended Joan Harper’s funeral on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May along with Ray and Merle Smith. A small gathering of course because of the corona virus restrictions and some of her dearest friends couldn’t attend because they are as old as Joan and somewhat frail. Joan was almost 91 when she died. She lived a long and useful life always helping others. Gary gave the reading and Malcolm the eulogy.

She was educated at MLC Elsternwick, was a more than competent tennis player, attended Stotts College after leaving school, met Stan when they both worked at Kraft, was engaged on her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and was married 10 months later. After 6 years of living with parents and then in their first house they moved to Drummond St to either the first or second house built there, and she was still there 60 years later.

She was a PHF and was on the Strathdon committee for many years, did meals on wheels, and supported Stan through his long illustrious career in Rotary, helping him establish 9 Probus clubs and assisting in three others. They travelled widely throughout the world together cruising up the Inside Passage back in 2001 but China was her most exciting time closely followed by Hong Kong. She regularly attended The Production Company musical theatre offerings together with most other musical productions in Melbourne. Later in life they concentrated more on travelling in Australia which they crisscrossed many times. They were avid travellers.

At home she looked after the front garden and the flowers while Stan did the back garden and vegetable patch. She often let Stan do the cooking as he was an extremely good cook with an extensive knowledge of spices which he evidently used to good effect, though Joan did the roasts. She liked a small glass of wine with her meal.

Joan had a shoe and handbag collection “to rival Imelda Marcos” we were told (who would have guessed it?). While Stan read all the newspaper every day, she stopped when she got to the Sports section, unless she saw an article on her favourite team “C’mon the Pies”!! She took an avid interest in tennis on TV which caused some problems when it clashed with Stan wanting to watch the cricket.

Finally, in what turned out to be her last six weeks, she went into hospital then to respite care in the last two weeks to her beloved Strathdon. A peaceful end to a full life.

## **CELEBRATIONS**

**Why not? Who needs a special reason?**



**Sure friend, we can walk together!**



## HOME SCHOOLING

These last few weeks have given many parents an in-sight into the life of a teacher. While I think it has been a slightly distorted in-sight I believe it has brought a new appreciation of the task facing teachers and their 30 children every day.



In 39 years within primary education in our state you get to see and hear so much that makes you laugh, appreciate what you have and have your spirit uplifted.

I met so many amazing children, fantastic parents and dedicated, talented teachers that made every day a pleasure (well most of them anyway!).

You heard about everything (that's right mum & dad – everything) that was going on in their lives. You shared a very special place in their lives and frequently you had more contact time than their parents. Trust and respect were everything with your class, just as they are in everyday life.

If only I had been smart enough to keep notes on the many hilarious, and often heart breaking, incidents from each day and filed the wonderful notes received from parents, going through them would have made COVID-19 shutdown a fun time.

As Johnny stands at the front of the class and regales his classmates with the exciting day he had yesterday in the city and seeing Santa and I sit at my table reading mum's note telling me how she kept Johnny home yesterday because he was feeling unwell.

As Mary tells us how her bed got wet last night (much sniggering and giggles from classmates) until we find that it was because dad forgot to put the cardboard over the hole in roof and the rain came in.

As an unknown (in the moment) woman throws her arms around me and delivers a resounding kiss on my cheek while standing on Spencer Street station with 50 grade 3 children. They were mightily impressed!! I had taught her son some years before and he had just graduated as a doctor and mum was saying Thank You!

As I stand looking down on Claire who has just had the most horrific fall on the asphalt and stripped skin from, what appeared to be, most of her legs and arms and she looks up at me and says, "I'm sorry Mr Marsh I tried to do it so gracefully."

As I answer the phone at some seriously disturbing time in the middle of the night to be greeted by, "Hi Mr Marsh – it's Glen." Glen had just received his HSC results by collecting the first edition coming off the press at the Herald-Sun. Mum and Dad were overseas and he couldn't contact them so I was his next choice to share his fantastic news.

As I explain to mum that she must make more of an effort to get Johnny to school and not let him hangout at home. And she replies, "Oh, Mr Marsh you know how it is. When they are quiet you don't go looking for them!"

The memories keep me smiling.

Remember – a day off school for a good cause is not the end of the earth. Learning is not confined to the classroom.

Often, we have no concept of how others live because it is so different to our own experiences.

It may take years before we really see the fruits of our labour and sometimes we never see them.

To all of the parents out there I say, "Enjoy your kids. They grow up so fast."

To those who have struggled with home schooling – well done! Don't despair and it is easier to teach somebody else's children than your own.

***KEEP SMILING!!!***



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