



IN TOUCH



PORT STEPHENS THIRD AGE LEARNING

Welcome back. **First the NEWS from your President**

We have good news. After 18 months of chaos, the state looks like we will be on our way back to normal before Christmas. Hopefully this will allow us to soon fully restart all our classes and Cuppa and Chat. At the moment the community centre is partially open but only for the fully vaccinated and masks are still compulsory. The rooms also still have severely restricted capacity.

This, plus the large number of Covid cases in Newcastle and the Hunter, resulted in us delaying any program restart until the new year in February. Also, our AGM is again being deferred until the Cuppa & Chat on 2nd March 2022.

Although we have not resumed our full program, several of our course leaders have asked to restart restricted courses for the remaining few weeks of this year. These courses are TaiChi, Balance and Bones, Brain Games, Healthy Aging and Discussion groups. The room numbers are tightly restricted and only those that were enrolled last term are being accommodated and of course we will stop classes again if infections rise.

Our big 25th Anniversary celebration High Tea was twice postponed but will now be held on **Wednesday 1st December at 2pm**. A separate email will be sent out with details of how to register and you can pay on the day. Since that event is in December, we have decided not to hold a separate Christmas function but to combine end of year celebrations with our Anniversary bash.

So, there is real joy appearing on the horizon and a big excuse to celebrate on 1st December. We encourage everyone to join us and see if we can start the process of putting 2021 behind us.

EDITORS COMMENT:

Following the policy of the U3A NSW Network, we do not include names or phone numbers on our website. All programs, newsletters etc have personal information removed before being uploaded in an effort to prevent back door hackers making use of them. Now that we are publishing **“In Touch”** on our webpage we are following that policy so you will notice that our contributors have all selected a pen-name to be used. Our new game is “Can you guess who wrote it?” Some of the pen-names are easy others are more obscure but they are not secret so if you would like to know who the authors are please contact me. If we ever manage to hold Cuppa & Chat again maybe we can parade our contributors and you can see how many you got right.

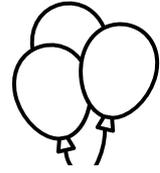
We have moved to publishing on the website so we can include longer articles which would present a problem if emailed to our many members. It also means we can include lots of your original contributions.

The Theme for this issue was “By the Sea” but as you can see, we don’t stick strictly to that. Our next theme is **A Place I Remember With Joy**. So get writing. Maybe just a few lines, a few paragraphs, a few pages or a poem, I think everyone has that happy place.





IT'S PARTY TIME!!!



At last, after several false starts we are hoping to be able to hold our 25th Anniversary party.

All members and past members are welcome to attend.

When: Wednesday 1st December at 2pm

Where: Soldiers Point Bowling Club function room

Cost: \$20 per person

RSVP: For catering purposes we need to know if you are coming. You will receive an email of how to respond

After so long away from any social events let's get together and celebrate.



CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR MEMBERS



ME AND MY SEWING MACHINE

Today I got my 'portable' sewing machine out to do some repair work. She is of 1958 vintage with full metal body and rather heavy to lift.

The year after I bought her I married and travelled overland to Darwin. The following year we were on the move again overland to Sydney where we boarded a ship bound across the Pacific Ocean for Peru via New Zealand and Easter Island. After tempestuous seas and arrival at the port of Callao we again travelled the long hard dusty road to Santiago in Chile together with the conglomeration of machinery we had brought with us from Australia for a business venture.

My sewing machine settled in at what became our home for the next six years plus. She didn't have lots to do in that time and the power supply was always very uncertain.

Skipping along - my children, who were born in Chile, and I and the sewing machine left Chile after a little over those six years, and as there was no way of air travel in those days and no direct sea route, we boarded a ship in Valparaiso and set sail up the coast of South America, with fifteen ports of call in between, including the amazing Panama Canal, and then crossing the Atlantic before our eventual arrival in Naples, Italy.

And so we left behind the land of Political unrest, earthquakes and poverty with my sewing machine safely tucked away in the cabin. On arrival in Naples, we offloaded everything for a one week wait for our next ship.

We had modest hotel accommodation, and sewing machine stayed safely in the room with the rest of the luggage while I and my children did a little exploring.

So a week later we set sail again for Australia via the Suez Canal and across the Indian Ocean to Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and finally Sydney. A lot of passengers suffered from seasickness but that didn't bother us or my sewing machine standing safely in a corner our cabin.

We had been travelling for two months.

Imagine my elation at being greeted on the wharf by my parents and sister who I hadn't seen in all those years and was able to introduce them to their first Grandchildren, albeit with a few language difficulties. So we all travelled together, including sewing machine, in a minibus to my parents home where it had all begun, and sewing machine had circumnavigated the world. She had travelled further than a lot of people and was still intact! Of course she originated from a Husquavarna factory in Sweden so that would have been another add on in her journey.

From my parents home we moved to a flat, then a small rental house and another flat, before finally settling in our forever home. It was a 1902 vintage cottage, rather run down, but it was going to be ours and after initially being told curtly "No, We don't sell houses to women!" dogged persistence paid off!

So the years seemed to fly along and periodically sewing machine did her bit. Everyone grew up and left, so sewing machine went into semi-retirement . No more pretty materials and brightly coloured cottons on reels to whiz through, or badges to sew on while someone waited impatiently.

The day came for a big move from our home of almost fifty years in order to be nearer family that had now almost all migrated more to the north. When the removalist truck had left and we checked that everything was in order in the house , sewing machine sat safely on the seat in the car and, like her owner, travelled into retirement, however, like me, she is still at the ready for 'odd jobs'.

Her original case did get a little battered over the years and sadly had to be discarded a while ago but she is pleased with now living in her nice bright trolley case from Spotlight, together with all her original accessories and original instruction book – and she has wheels!

I sometimes ponder at what might happen to her when I am no longer here, but maybe in many years to come she will sit on a dusty museum shelf and passers by will wonder how our generation coped with such a 'contraption'.

Well, enough of this prattle, she is all set up ready now to get those repair jobs done!

By PortGirl

6 October 2021



Waiting for the storm

The clouds are moving in,
the leaves are shaking in the trees
the dogs seek shelter under the house and
the cat has given up chasing the mouse
and moved inside curling up asleep in the basket.
The birds are no where to be seen but what are the insects doing underground?

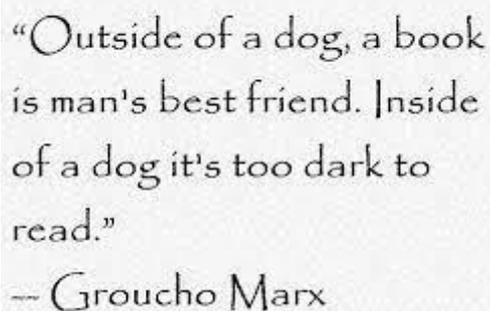
The weather boffins are at their desks are looking at their screens
of numbers, pressures and altitudes.
Using software of algorithm's to make predictions for radio and TV.
They do not bother going outside to look at the sky.
They trust their instruments.

The old man is sitting on the front porch sipping on a beer,
his radio is tuned to old time music and he can smell the food cooking in the kitchen.
For as long as he can remember he has been sensitive to changes in the weather
and he has learnt to read the signs.
The rustle of leaves, a blast of cold air coming down from the clouds
and looking at what the cats and dogs do.

He knows what the birds know.
They know that they cannot fly in strong winds and so they take cover.
He does not need to look at the barometer,
he can feel the pressure. His instincts tell him. If he has doubts he can always look at the sky
Another sip of beer and he says to himself it will be here within the hour.

And it is !
Driving rain, screeching wind, black clouds, thunder claps
and the deafening sound of hail stones on the tin roof.
With a wry smile he says to himself. I am not that smart but I do know weather.
My only regret is my age.
When I was young I could look at a woman and tell whether !

Conrad J Sept 2021



“Outside of a dog, a book
is man's best friend. Inside
of a dog it's too dark to
read.”
— Groucho Marx



Money isn't everything
but it sure keeps you in
touch with your children.

J. Paul Getty

© 2000

LIFE

What is a life ?
How do you measure it?
How do you value it?
If you could have a re run what would you do differently?
There are so many uncertainties
so many probabilities
so many chances
and luck.
Some people say they would not do anything differently.
Really!
Everyone has a story,
of achievement
of failure
of ecstasy
disappointment and depression
of being in the right place at the right time
and
being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Is life about having fun
or is it about collecting?
Can you blame Rupert Murdoch's father
for introducing him to Monopoly?
Or
Boris Johnson's father
for making him watch
Punch and Judy?

There are two important events in one's life!
Birth and death
I was asleep at the birth and most probably
I will be asleep at my death.
Yesterday my blood pressure number
was a cricketers dream 190 not out
and I was afraid to sleep for fear
I might miss the second event!

Conrad J October 2021



Pollards' Bloody Castle

'Bloody Hell!' With that explosive statement, my husband, Tom, stopped the car. It was 1982 and we were on our way to Brett Reserve in the wilds of Gloucester and Barrington tops with our two early teenage daughters to join about 25 other friends camping, and we had reached Doyalson after leaving home in Mt Kuring-Gai. We had been travelling for an hour and a half.

'What? What?' I asked with anxiety, thinking he was having a heart attack or something similar.

'I've forgotten the bloody tent poles!'

'Oh no!' our daughters yelled in unison, contemplating the return and return journeys we would have to make before continuing from this point. They were already suffering the indignity of camping with their parents!! However, that was just what we had to do, and so arrived at the camping ground much later than the others.

This wouldn't have mattered with an ordinary tent, but ours was known by our camping friends as 'Pollards' Bloody Castle'! We had bought it blind as a pig in a poke when we were first invited to join the campers with short notice. A friend of a friend said he had a tent for sale, so we bought it sight unseen. It was huge! Big enough to sleep 6+ people, and it was old fashioned in that the many poles had to be inserted into their correct slots before erection, then it had to be stood up in place, and the tent pegs fitted to the multiple guy ropes before being hammered into the ground!! It took at least 10 people to erect the damn thing!

So, when we arrived late, and started the procedure, the others stood around and laughed, knowing what was involved. They eventually took pity on us, and joined in the fun, complaining good humouredly that this was what you got when you invited Poms to go camping!

Although this time it took only an hour to erect The Castle, it was already dark because of oncoming rain. But, not just rain! It was a storm to beat all storms!!!! My family was snug in the tent when we heard a rattle at the zippered 'door'.

'Jeannie, can we come in?' I opened the flap and let in 2 bedraggled adults and similarly appearing kids. They had just settled down, when more voices called for admittance, and eventually, the whole 25 adults and kids were in our tent, some having had their own tents blown away! Most had brought food and cooking utensils, and more important, bottles of wine.

We talked far into the night, relating stories, some of which made us roar with laughter. And when Tom, my husband, who was well known as a laconic Clint Eastwood type who barely uttered a word that he thought was unnecessary, began to relate with gusto the ins and outs of his haemorrhoid operation...! Well!

That was one of the best camping experiences I have ever had – thanks to Pollards' Bloody Castle!

By The Genie 2021

