

LIVING TODAY

IN MOOROOLBARK / YARRA RANGES

No.16

JUNE
2006

COMPASSION in action

St. Peter Julian Eymard
Primary School

The
PURSUIT of
HAPPINESS
*Is it attainable in
this life?*



8,500 Free Copies Distributed Throughout Mooroolbark & District

Do you want to **live longer?**

Have you ever travelled on public transport and felt totally alone? Or been present in a crowded public place and been aware of feeling completely isolated?

Sitting in the silent subway, I am surrounded by silent people hidden behind their newspapers or staring away in the world of their own fantasies. Nobody speaks with a stranger, and a patrolling policeman keeps reminding me that people are not out to help one another...!

Fortunately, for most of us, such feelings of isolation and loneliness are only occasional. Sadly, though, others experience these feelings often.

Recently, Melbourne played host to the Commonwealth games. The city sparkled. Crowds of people were wonderfully entertained. Events were efficiently organised! Public spaces were used creatively for performances and displays.

Games Federation president Mike Fennell even described the Melbourne Games as *simply the best!* In addition, during *Melbourne 2006*, many people told me just how proud they were to be Melbournians.

My wife and I took the opportunity to attend one of the events. We thoroughly enjoyed the entire experience. But, our enduring memory will be that of the openness and friendliness of the public. We travelled to the city by train, and enjoyed the novelty of speaking to people sitting and standing around us. We initiated conversations, and in turn responded to others inviting us to chat. Interestingly, these conversations weren't merely exchanges of pleasantries, but an active sharing – of opinion about the Games, viewpoints about a range of subjects and recollections of life-experiences. And at the event, even amidst all the excitement, people in the crowd around us seemed to be more than willing to talk to us.

Spending a day at the Games became for us – and countless others, a celebration of community – a memorable time to enjoy in the company of others.

Melbourne 2006 provided a glimpse of what our community could be like! My wife said simply: *I wish it was always this way.* So what is it about events like this, that help people respond more openly to one another?

Personally, I believe that the

happy enthusiasm and helpfulness of around 15,000 aqua-clad volunteers made the Games what they were. Here were people generously giving up their time and devoting their energy to serve those of us who crowded into a variety of venues. Their contribution involved personal sacrifice. They gave up their time... took annual leave... rearranged personal schedules and everyday tasks. They did so without complaint. In fact, the volunteers I spoke to described their involvement in the Games as the highlight of a lifetime.

As is often the case – our involvement in helping others, leaves us the richer for the experience!

“...our involvement in helping others, leaves us the richer for the experience!”

Just days later, the Mooroolbark community hosted our 2006 Celebrate



Mooroolbark Festival - *Fun and Games.* It took place on a cool, cloudy, rain threatened Saturday. In spite of the inclement weather, many people attended the variety of activities, many of which were free – the animal enclosure, the jumping castle, sporting challenges, the parade, decorated bike competition, children's craft activities, crate stacking, face painting, balloon twisting, colouring competition, skateboarding ramps...

And the marketplace offered displays and information from local businesses and organisations – along with

yummy food served from several locations. You could even chat to your local MPs – or the staff from the Community Bank... or visit the interactive Police display, the mobile library or the dog obedience display...

And throughout the day – free entertainment took place on the community stage... bands, gorgeously costumed dancers, *tai chi* exponents, school groups, *Elf Sneaky Bottom*, the Police Pipe Band... there'd even been an early morning combined church service at 9am in the Community Centre for those out of bed early enough...

And the atmosphere during the day? Relaxed, happy, friendly... people enjoying one another... talking, laughing, catching up, making new friends... Many people commented about how they enjoyed the friendliness, the family atmosphere, the variety of free activities on offer...

As an outcome of the Festival Mooroolbark received a greater gain - the further enhancement of our community that took place as people interacted so positively!

So!

On behalf of all of us - many thanks to all who contributed... everyone who attended, participated, planned, worked tirelessly behind the scenes in contributing time, energy, ideas and talents, those who helped to fund the Festival through generous sponsorship... the stallholders, entertainers, MCC staff, the sporting, youth and other community groups who were part of the day...

Through what was learned on the day, the 2007 Festival - planned for Saturday March 24 – will be even better.

It's good for you and me to be thankful that others go out of their way so that we can enjoy occasions like these, because communities become healthier as people have regular opportunities to get together to celebrate and contribute to their community... as dynamic networks develop... as effective partnerships increase whereby diverse community organizations work together for the common good. And, the essential thing for us to realize, is that healthy communities are only possible

through ordinary people like you and me becoming involved in these processes.

We could choose to be apathetic... we could excuse ourselves as being too busy... we could make all manner of excuses for not volunteering our help.

But, think for a moment... Most of us value safe, healthy communities. We want to live somewhere where our children can happily enjoy their formative years. We'd like to know that our elderly residents could enjoy retirement securely. We'd like to be sure that all of us could live together in a state of well-being.

And so we can! And we will if more of us are prepared to help! It takes a personal leap – a step out of our comfort zones - to commit to help make Mooroolbark a great place to live during the next decades.

But, why not do it??

“...evidence shows that people who help others through community organisations are not only happier, but they live longer”

The evidence shows that people who help others through community organisations are not only happier, but they live longer. Now *there's* an incentive! And as you get involved, firm friendships form... all manner of people are helped... we have fun together... we're able to see our township develop positively. And if you're going to live longer, why not enjoy those extra years even more!

So, what will you do?

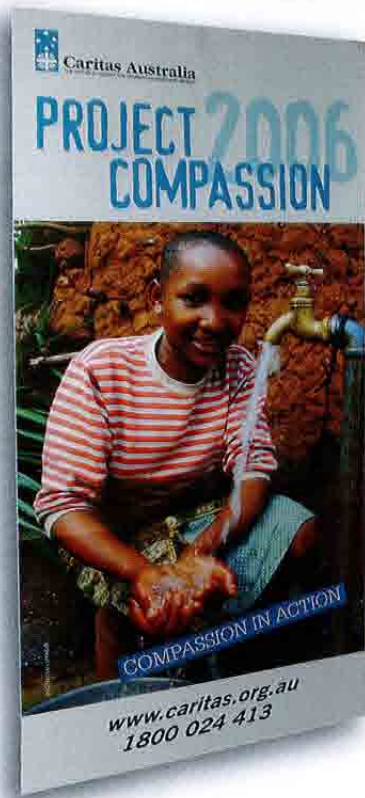
Retreat into personal busyness... be isolated like those *hidden behind their newspapers or staring away in the world of their own fantasies?* Or will you be on the lookout for ways to help others... to build community? And will you, too, discover that by so doing, your own life becomes so much more enjoyable and satisfying... and longer?



Randall Bouchier

¹ Nouwen, Henri. 1990. *Reaching Out, Fount* – Harper Collins, London. p.4





Compassion in Action 2006

St Peter Julian Eymard Primary School

Every year during Lent, as part of the Parish involvement in "Project Compassion", the children of St Peter Julian Primary School in Mooroolbark collect funds for **Caritas Australia**, the official Catholic agency for overseas aid and development. Caritas helps people everywhere, regardless of race, political beliefs, gender or religion.

This year the students watched a DVD presentation showing how the provision of running water, for communities in Tanzania, impacts the lives of those people. After discussing how lucky we are to have water at the turn of a tap, the children decided to see how much money they could raise to help this great cause.

On the DVD, the children saw how funded communities work together to build water tanks and to pipe water to a centrally located tap in the village. This means that villagers (mainly women and children) do not have to walk up to 16 kilometres a day to collect water, and the water they use is clean and safe. With access to clean water, children now have time to go to school and families now have water for vegetable gardens. Families also have more time together.

Each of our 18 classrooms had a Project Compassion box to put donations in. The year 5/6 level classes set high targets, aiming to raise enough money to provide a tap for a village. It was great to watch the

donations grow. Some children gave their pocket money, or asked their families for money. Others did extra chores at home to earn money to donate.

With the combined effort of all the children in the school, the total amount raised was \$1098.55. This amount of money will provide taps for two villages and improve the lives of many families in rural Tanzania.

"...we have realised how lucky we are to have both hot and cold water so easily accessible in our homes."

We are proud of our achievement and our ability to help those in need and we have realised how lucky we are to have both hot and cold water so easily accessible in our homes. We know that this money will bring clean, safe water and new life to many people.



Written by Alex, Jade, Jarryd & Jess. (Members of the Student Action Team)

Treasured Babies Program A Mooroolbark-Based Support Service



Ann Margaret Cathy Karen Cindy & Mel



Clothing in a baby pack

We are all familiar with the highly valuable work of the "SIDS" organisation in their much needed support, physical assistance and counseling offered to families impacted by Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, late-term miscarriage and stillbirth. But, did you know about the SIDS support service - the "Treasured Babies Program" that is based right here in Mooroolbark? This state-wide support program was an initiative of an advisory group of bereaved parents organised by SIDS in 2002. It aims to help families acknowledge and honour the life and death of newborn babies, supporting those families in very practical and tangible ways. Gift packs containing sets of beautiful, tiny, hand-made clothing are provided through health professionals, counselors, and funeral directors. This helps parents and family to be involved in dressing and preparing their infant for the funeral service.

The gift packs also include a naming certificate, information about on-going peer and professional support services and a brochure entitled "Making Decisions After Your Baby has Died."

The T.B.P. committee of management coordinates a wide network of volunteers, across Victoria, who hand-make the tiny clothing, print the certificates, paint memory boxes, prepare the gift

parcels and facilitate distribution to needy families. Additional helpers are always much appreciated.

The Mooroolbark premises is at **Shop 5, The Terrace**. The volunteers meet in the shop each Tuesday and Friday morning from 9:30 to 12 noon.

Anyone who would like to consider becoming a volunteer, or who would just like to find out more about what the volunteers do, is cordially invited to visit the shop on a Tuesday or Friday morning or to call Cindy or Cathy, at the shop, on 9727 5699. You will be made most welcome and will be able to see just how things are done.

The latest Bureau of Statistics figures show that in 2004 there were 1,300 stillbirths in Australia or 5.3 per 1000. Alarmingly, in 30% of those cases, the cause of death remains unknown - even after comprehensive investigation. Much work remains to be done.

In addition to its family support work the SIDS organisation maintains a research program to continually search out further answers to the problems of infant death.

Please keep "Sids & Kids" in mind when the Red-Nose Day fund-raiser comes around again on June 30th.

A Unique Performance Event

10x10

One of the very positive changes that has emerged in our society, in more recent times, can be seen in the significant steps that have been taken to assist people with disabilities to enjoy the same freedoms and opportunities in life that most of us take for granted. At all levels, things have been done to help make our community a more friendly place for the disabled.

10x10 is just one very good example of the kinds of outcomes that have emerged as a result of this move within our communities. When Gerard Langridge put forward the suggestion that the local concert for disabled performers be re-established in Mooroolbark, he received immediate support from all areas. A steering committee was established – involving people from Community Services in the shire, from Scope, our local Community Centre and other interested groups. The concert is

now set to go! It is envisaged that it will be an annual event.

Despite suffering from a personal disability from birth, Gerard has developed many personal skills which he is now putting to good use as he contributes significantly to the planning and preparations for the concert. He defines the purpose of the concert as, "Providing disabled people with the opportunity to participate in the natural enjoyment to be found in public performances."

Any disabled people with an interest in being involved in the performances are invited to contact Gerard through the Mooroolbark Community Centre.

Gerard, and the steering committee, invite you to join them for this unique event which showcases the talents of local artists who have a disability.



Gerard Langridge

Showcasing the performing talents of local artists who have a disability

**Friday Sept
1st 2006**

Mooroolbark Community Centre

10x10

Program Commences **7pm**
Tickets **\$4** each

Ring the Community Centre to book seats.



Offering fun and support at "Celebrate Mooroolbark" our local festival. Senior Constables Daniel Scioré, Rachel Thomas and Andrew Brice.



Senior Sergeant Jeff Haines

Working together for a safer community

We all want to feel personally safe and comfortable in our homes and within our local community, but are we aware of the part we each can, and should, play in making this a reality?

Senior Sergeant Jeff Haines and his policing team in Mooroolbark are totally committed to making a positive impact on community life in our neighbourhood but they well understand the critical need for partnership in this process. Where we, as individuals or community groups, feel we would benefit from police help with a particular activity, event or problem, or where we identify issues of general public concern, he invites us to give him a call to discuss ways to work together on these matters. As he says, "We may not always have all the answers but we can at least work on it together. Often we do find that, together, we can

make a positive difference."

Senior Sergeant Haines also encourages us to work together to help establish just what is desirable and acceptable within our community and to assist in making a community stand at the appropriate level. This may mean being willing to speak up when we encounter or observe actions that are unacceptable, rather than just leaving it for others to deal with. It may even mean stepping up at certain times to help deal with problems.

As he says, "Community ownership and contribution is a vital key to ensuring that we maintain and further develop a safe neighbourhood for all concerned."

Certainly, we can all be thankful to our local community police for their proactive approach towards building a better and stronger community for us all.



Balloonaholics

40 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark
9726 6999



Andrea Tetley

Balloonaholics is a family affair! Gary and Judy Tickell, and daughter Andrea Tetley, began the business 17 years ago, in Heidelberg. From there, they moved to Blackburn for a few years – and now to Mooroolbark. Over the years they have contributed to many special events such as the opening of the single gauge railway from Brisbane to Perth in 1995, where they arranged a monster balloon release to help mark this unique occasion.

They specialise in balloon-based decorations for functions of all sizes. A recent challenge was the decoration of the Foster's marquee at the Melbourne Cup. Their main service, however, is directed towards family celebrations such

as birthdays, engagements, weddings, etc. and to business functions. At the shop, customers can view photographic records of many examples of their decorative work. They also offer party supplies, helium balloons, gas kits, bouquets, printed balloons, and more.

There is obviously a huge demand for their services as they sold over 10,000 balloons (more than half of them helium filled) in the first seven weeks of business in their Brice Avenue shop.

We welcome "Balloonaholics" to Mooroolbark and wish the family every success in this new stage of their business venture.

A pair of 'in-home businesses'

Jason and Karen are next door neighbours who are each running a home-based business. They are at 24 and 26 Neville Street, Mooroolbark. A major enjoyment for both of them is the feeling of community that they experience as they work alongside one another and provide their services to those from our neighbourhood and beyond.

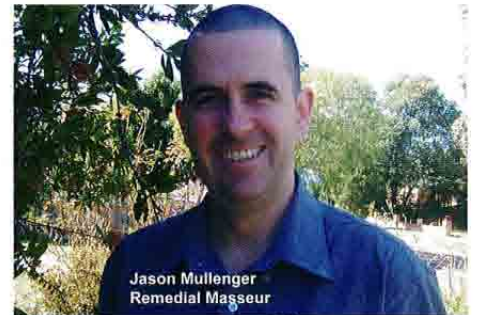
Jason obtained his qualifications in remedial massage whilst working as an orderly at the Alfred Hospital. He first became interested in this work, whilst at the hospital, when he personally experienced the health benefits that massage can offer. He greatly enjoys seeing others benefit from discovering that many of those niggles and aches that we all put up with at times can be dealt with quite effectively. He says, "It's a real pleasure to see those looks of surprise and relief." Sounds worth a try!

Jason is a registered private health fund provider. **He can be contacted on 9727 3587.**

Karen's business has been operating in her Neville Street home for 16 years. Many of her clients have been with her over much of that time. She is most appreciative of the many valued friendships that have developed over those years.

She describes the atmosphere of her salon as "Warm, relaxed and family-friendly. Kids are most welcome – there are lots of toys to keep them occupied while Mum is being pampered." Services she provides include waxing, deep-cleansing facials, lash and brow tinting, manicures and pedicures. **Karen can be contacted on 9726 5452** for appointment times. She looks forward to hearing from you.

We wish them both well in their respective business ventures.



Jason Mullenger
Remedial Masseuse



Karen Wilkins
Beautician



Monty the Clown

Monty the Rotary Clown

A big hit with the kids at **Celebrate Mooroolbark** in April was Monty the Clown with his fun outfit, free helium balloons and give-away sweets. Local businessman, Gary Grant, represents the Montrose Rotary Club in the charity work he does as Monty.

That work centres mainly around specially needy children, children's hospitals, etc, but he also supports the "Rotary Car Boot Sale" which is conducted at the Mooroolbark railway car-

park on the 2nd Sunday of each month. Proceeds from that car-boot sale are directed towards local community projects and also provide support to our local boy-scout and girl-scout groups. Gary is supported by Balloonaholics / Mooroolbark in his charity work.

The festival organising committee thanks Gary for his offer of support for our local celebration of all that is good in Mooroolbark.

There was a young girl from Ireland

Randall Bouchier

I don't know what you think about politicians. Sometimes their press is less than flattering. But this story might encourage you – a story about a young married woman – born in Ireland from a working class background, who, as the MP for Evelyn, represents the northern half of Mooroolbark. Hers was a fairy-tale turned sour. Her life hit the wall!

Not long married to the man of her dreams... house just built... two incomes... great career in the short-term money market... apparently secure future... planning their family...until the day her husband collapsed and died whilst buying a cappuccino...

"I was absolutely devastated... I didn't know anyone in my local community because we were both working fulltime in the city and I felt very isolated..."

"A week after his funeral, I discovered I was pregnant with our first baby... I was blessed to have a part of him... and eventually I was presented with a 9lb 10 baby boy - Matthew... he was a gift from God for me, to keep me on track, because I don't know how I would've coped..."

"I was still in my late twenties – a widow... I couldn't maintain my career with a child on my own... it was a very dark and difficult time for eighteen months until I sorted myself out... struggling on a sole parent pension... it was emotionally very difficult... but there was still a huge void in my life, and raising a child on your own is not an easy feat for anyone... not just the physical stuff, but the emotional support."

This was the experience of Heather McTaggart – State MP for Evelyn. Fortunately, Heather found great support from family, her church and from helpful people at Morrison House in Mt. Evelyn. She immersed herself in her community - ties developed and eventually Heather was invited to join the Committee of Management at Morrison House... later came involvement with Mt. Evelyn Special School, Fernhill Pre-school and a supportive role in Mt. Evelyn's township renewal and development.

"That certainly opened up my eyes to what was actually going on in the local area – you don't really know if you're on the periphery – and I could see all of these wonderful people doing amazing things... connecting isolated people like me to craft groups or support groups or further education... it was



Heather McTaggart



Heather McTaggart, Kelly Delaney and Cathy Sword

an opportunity to connect with the families in the area... friendships have been formed that hold fast..."

At 39, life took another twist – this time for the better! Heather remarried, eventually giving birth to twins. And then, six weeks prior to the last State election she was asked to stand for State parliament – winning an 'unwinnable' seat requiring a 12½% swing!

I asked her how she'd like to be remembered: "As a very down-to-earth, approachable representative of people... to take government to task on what we need as a community..."

And so, Heather thrives on involvement with the 'grassroots' in our community... she's supportive of volunteers – loves meeting them. She respects and is inspired by what they accomplish and enjoys being accessible to, and challenging our young people to be involved in community...

I hope Heather's story encourages you. In the midst of personal difficulty, she learned the importance and richness of community... and the unusual and sustainable satisfactions and benefits of being involved... helping out... making a difference!

Very best wishes Graeme

Well-known local identity, Graeme Whitby, will be retiring, at the end of June after a teaching career spanning 40 years. For the last nine of those years he has been Principal at Mooroolbark East Primary. He considers himself to be most privileged to have had the opportunity to work alongside such a caring and supportive staff and school community - throughout these final years of his long career.

Prior to coming to Mooroolbark East, Graeme was Principal at Park Orchards Primary School. Throughout the years he taught at many local schools including Warrandyte South, Gladesville, Dorset, Birmingham, Bimbadeen Heights, Lilydale and Seville Primary Schools.

An earlier highlight of his teaching life was the two and half years he spent at the RAAF School in Penang, Malaysia. He was in charge of the primary school on Penang Island when it closed in 1988.

Graeme's varied career has included class teaching, at all levels and a number of specialist roles including library, art and physical education. For four years he worked in the field of providing support to children with learning difficulties and a range of enrichment activities for more talented students. He also had a short time as a consultant at the Regional Office of Education.

Reflecting on his 40 years in primary education, Graeme says, "There are, indeed, many highlights to look back on but my greatest sense of enjoyment and fulfillment has always come from the many opportunities my work has given me to help make a positive difference in the lives of young people. Helping them along their journey, through good and difficult times, to becoming valued and successful members of our community."

The school community and Graeme's many friends and colleagues wish him the best of health and every happiness in his retirement years.



Pembroke P.S. welcomes new principal

Pembroke Primary School welcomes Mr John Malbon who took up the position of principal at the beginning of term 2, 2006.

John resides in Chirnside Park with wife, Jan, who is also a primary school teacher. She is currently teaches at Lilydale West Primary School. They have three grown-up children who continue to live at home with them.

John says, "I have been made to feel very welcome at Pembroke and am working hard

on recognising the faces and learning the names of the children and parents. I am greatly impressed by the care and commitment demonstrated by the staff and look forward to working closely with the whole school community to ensure the optimum, comprehensive development of all of our students."

We congratulate John on his appointment and wish him every success in his leadership role.



The pursuit of happiness

The famous US Declaration of Independence of 1776, after an opening preamble, states: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

These have gone on to become not just the cornerstone of the American constitution and society, but the accepted values of virtually all western style democracies. And while most of us could make a reasonable fist of defining "Life" and "Liberty", what is it that the founding fathers had in mind when they put down "the pursuit of Happiness"?

I don't know if you've ever taken time to reflect on this. But some great minds have tackled it over the years – philosophers, psychologists, all sorts of thinkers – and have found "happiness" in particular notoriously difficult to pin down. It's the sort of situation where we all know what it means but can't find the words to define it satisfactorily.

We can make statements like:

Happiness is... an evening at home when the phone doesn't ring; Or... a day with the family on the beach; Or... good food, good mates and a good laugh: and know exactly what we're talking about.

The very nature of "happiness" makes it hard to define. It's almost like quicksilver to grab hold of. However, the good news is that recent psychological studies of happiness and well-being have come up with some significant insights, particularly regarding its pursuit, without getting caught up in its slipperiness as a concept.

So what do they tell us about being – or becoming – happy? The first thing they tell us is that we all have a natural state of tranquillity or well-being which remains pretty constant through life. In popular parlance we are acknowledging its reality when we talk of our "comfort zone". Although it's more of a feeling or state than a "zone" that

THE BENEFITS OF HAPPINESS

1. Social Rewards

- a. Higher odds of marriage
- b. Lower odds of divorce
- c. More friends
- d. Stronger social support
- e. Richer social life

2. Better Work Outcomes

- a. Greater creativity
- b. Increased productivity
- c. Higher quality of work
- d. Higher income
- e. More activity, more energy

3. Personal Benefits

- a. Bolstered immune system
- b. Greater longevity
- c. Greater self control & coping abilities

Adapted from the article "If it makes you happy" (Forward Thinking 1/2006)

can be described objectively. Whenever circumstances change and our happiness state is enhanced or disturbed, in time we inevitably return to it.

This bottom line is simply a happiness defined by a lack of negatives. If we are to look to improve our happiness we have to go beyond this. And this is where our life and its circumstances come in. Circumstances such as our age, health, nationality, status and personal history. Which of these then do the studies show count in this respect?

Generally happiness can be linked with being happily married, having a decent salary and work security, good health and being a religious believer. But notice I said generally.

Unfortunately our society implicitly – and explicitly at times – overrates the relationship between money and happiness. Just think of the public "happiness" of the person who has just won a million dollars on a jackpot or quiz show or as a surprise gift. What, me happy? You bet! And we all wish!!

Yet study upon study shows that money does not buy happiness. Which should encourage all of us. Happiness is cheap and depends much less on chance than a windfall or win. A year 2000 study of 7,167 students from 41 countries found greater satisfaction with life among those who rated love more highly than money compared with those who thought highly of the value of money.

In fact, when put together, the sum total of all the life factors only accounted for about 10% of variation in people's happiness. On top of this, the studies showed that things which temporarily improve our happiness don't last. For instance, moving into a dream home does increase a person's happiness

level – for a time. But soon that becomes our new "normal" and we begin looking for happiness somewhere else. Underlining this is the fact that since the 1950s happiness levels have remained remarkably constant in the face of a dramatic increase in our living standards.

ON HAPPINESS

From the Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759) by Adam Smith, eighteenth century economist & thinker.

"Through the whole of his life he pursues the idea of a certain artificial and elegant repose which he may never arrive at, for which he sacrifices a real tranquillity that is at all times in his power, and which, if in the extremity of old age he should at least attain to it, he will find to be in no respect preferable to that humble security and contentment which he had abandoned for it. It is then, in the last dregs of life, his body wasted with toil and disease, his mind galled and ruffled by the memory of a thousand injuries and disappointments which he imagines he has met with from the injustice of his enemies, or from the perfidy and ingratitude of his friends, that he begins at last to find that wealth and greatness are mere trinkets of frivolous utility, no more adapted for procuring ease of body or tranquillity of mind, than the tweezer-cases of the lover of toys."

Quoted in *Adam Smith Behavioural Economist* by Ashraf et al (2004).

So neither life circumstances nor the base line tranquillity prove to be helpful in the pursuit of lasting happiness. This leaves what the psychologists call "intentional activities", which they broadly classify as behavioural (e.g. exercising regularly), thinking (e.g. counting your blessings), and

exercising choice (e.g. reaching out for set goals).

Like all things these are easier said than done. But what we can know now is that they are tools we can use, if we so choose, to enhance the pursuit of real life happiness. Reproduced below are the top ten tips for improving happiness as adapted from an article "If it makes you happy" (Forward Thinking 1/2006):

TOP TEN TIPS FOR IMPROVING HAPPINESS

(in no special order)

1. Don't think happiness has anything to do with money.
2. Exercise regularly – It helps deal with mild depression & anxiety. It stimulates more energy & is good for mind and body.
3. Have sex with someone you love.
4. Invest time & effort in close relationships – Confide & discuss problems and issues.
5. Pause & think on the good things in life.
6. Seek work that employs your skills in a job you enjoy.
7. Get the sleep your body needs – Sleep deficit leads to fatigue, moods and lack of concentration.
8. Don't chase after happiness for its own sake – enjoy the moment.
9. Take control of your life and set achievable goals – Set goals that will stretch you but are within your reach.
10. Remember to follow rules 1-9.



Terry Villiers

Mooroolbark Community Bank Branch  Bendigo Bank

Supporting The Local Community.

What is happiness? The biblical perspective



Just what is happiness? Is it attainable in this life? To what degree?

Philosophers have tackled this question in many ways over the centuries. A group called the hedonists decided that life has only one good objective - the happiness of pleasurable experiences. This is found in the sum of pleasurable moments in a person's life. Other philosophers feel there is more to it than this, but disagree as to what that more is.

The Bible has much to say on the subject, and it firstly tackles it from the point of view of this life. The Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes explores what can be achieved, given unlimited opportunities and resources. It finds there is an enjoyment in building, in creating things, working on projects. But this is fleeting and disappears once the task is completed. Then there are the downsides of life. Accidents happen. People die, are maimed, suffer tragedies and disasters from things outside their control. Happiness is gone again, and again, and again. (All this concurs with the studies referred to in our earlier article, *The Pursuit of Happiness*.)

After considering all the possibilities and vagaries of this life, the author concludes that of itself life is a series of frustrations and a chasing after wind. So he sums up the best that this life has to offer (again in accord with the recent studies): "It is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labour under the sun in the few days of life God has given him."¹ and to "enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life."² He saw the same things our recent studies did - that even unlimited wealth and achievement can provide no lasting happiness. So Ecclesiastes finishes by pointing to the spiritual as the answer to the question.

In the pages of the New Testament we find real happiness described in terms of a gift from God, a gift that is universally available. This is a bequest Jesus left for all of us - a gift that does not depend on achievement or talent or even opportunity. It provides a deep and lasting happiness that is found in qualities such as humility and meekness, feeling for others in their misfortunes, in being kind and forgiving, in being a peacemaker. This kind of happiness flourishes even in the face of hunger, poverty, tragedy and persecution.³ And those who accept this legacy quite naturally call themselves Christians.

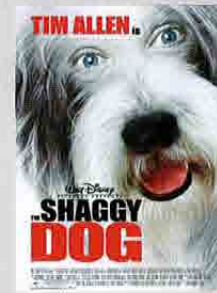
Recently I heard of an elderly man who lived in our area and had just died. He had lived in a modest, older home and was regularly seen working in his yard in his old work clothes. When he went out or headed for the shops, he would put on his cardigan or jacket and drive off in his trusty old ute. After his death his neighbours were stunned to find out he was worth a million dollars several times over. They had always assumed from his appearance and lifestyle that he was nothing more than an aged pensioner.

Unfortunately, many of us who would call ourselves Christian are similar to that elderly man. We are holders of a spiritual fortune which we hardly access or spend. So our lives don't seem that different from the ordinary. That legacy, that bequest of Jesus, was not meant to be stored away for the emergencies or extreme circumstances of life. God expects us to use it and realise that happiness (the Bible uses the term "blessedness") in our day to day lives, and in doing so, to share that happiness with others - the happiness that is found in truly God-given humility, meekness, caring and generosity of spirit, a joy of life that is priceless.

¹ Ecc 5:11 NIV ² Ecc 8:9 NIV ³ See Matt 5: 3 - 14 , Luke 6 : 20 - 23.

Terry Villiers

FREE FAMILY FILM NIGHT



Wednesday
June 28th

7.30pm

ALL WELCOME

Film: THE SHAGGY DOG

Come along to Mooroolbark Community Centre Wed. June 28th. The usual free ice-cream and tea & coffee will be offered.

This school holidays program is presented by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship, in partnership with our Community Centre as a service to young families in our neighbourhood.

For bookings contact the Community Centre on 9726 5488
See ya there!

Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship
- Serving our Community



Sometimes it's good to take some time off and just be with friends and family. How often do we sit together to enjoy each other? No agenda, no structure, just friends and family having a great time.

Easter Sunrise 2006 was held over the Easter weekend at Life Ministry Centre. It was something like a family reunion. No agenda other than to enjoy the family: God's family. We celebrated, we laughed, we cried, we remembered, we shared, we looked ahead, we were grateful, we were hopeful, we were family with our eyes focused on our heavenly Father. We sat on couches, on bean bags, some had naps, and others stood and walked around. We were family. We were together. We were with God. We rested. The music was sacred. God shared his heart. We opened our hearts to God.

It's good to take some time off and just be with friends and family.

Support for our young people at hand

Ideally, growing up should be about friendships, a never ending social life and that other activity, - school. Occasionally things happen to young people that mess this lifestyle up.

The Shire of Yarra Ranges has a Youth Services team dedicated to providing assistance to local young people during these difficult periods. Yarra Ranges Mayor, Monika Keane says through its support services, the Shire helps young people reach adulthood knowing that they can deal with life's challenges.

"Coping with family traumas, peer group pressures and feelings of inadequacy should not be dealt with alone. The Shire has a number of programs designed to meet all these issues," she says. "Supporting our young people with counselling, PATS (Paying Attention to Self) - a program for young people with a parent experiencing mental illness) and specialised youth mental health programs such as the TRACTION program goes a long way to help them find their way into adulthood."

Youth Services offers individual and family counselling to young people aged 12 - 25 who live, attend school or work in the Shire of Yarra Ranges. The free counselling service is available at Lilydale, Belgrave, Healesville and Yarra Junction.

For more information about the Shire's youth and family counselling program, PATS, or any of the other programs offered by Youth Services please ring 1300 368 333. You can also check out Youth Services' website at www.yrys.com.

James Martin



Rebecca Infanti, Sylvia Marov, & Katherina Verscharen
Youth Services Personnel

Various training levels offered:

1. PUPPY PRE-SCHOOL

For pups 12-18 weeks old, focussing on communication, early skills and developing temperament.

2. BASIC OBEDIENCE COURSE

Basics that provide added pleasure for both owner and pet.

3. ADVANCED LEVEL ONE

Introduces more refined techniques and skills.

4. ADVANCED LEVEL TWO

A higher standard of obedience work..

Interested?

Contact Hanne on 9733 4368 for further details.

Good news for dog lovers

An opportunity to meet and work with others, with similar interests, as you develop temperament, skills and behaviours in your pet. **Active Dog Training** is conducted by local identity Hanne Hahn, an accredited instructor with over 30 years experience at all levels in dog obedience training and in solving behavioural problems. Sessions are conducted each Saturday morning at Mooroolbark College. Small groups provide ample opportunity for personalised tuition. A good social time is enjoyed.



Hanne (centre) with a volunteer group who demonstrated obedience skills at Celebrate Mooroolbark in April.

“ Hanne's philosophy:
Dogs give us their unconditional love. Therefore they have the right to be treated with love and affection. ”

Local teachers receive national award



Liz Bonnett (representing Bimbadeen Heights), Amanda Ellingworth (Mooroolbark College) Janet Haase (Manchester) Hon Julia Bishop, Minister for Education, Meriden James (Kilsyth Primary School) Robyn Floyd (Cluster Educator) Mieke Alexander (Mooroolbark East Primary)

Congratulations to our team of 6 local teachers (pictured) who were recently flown to the capital to receive the award of "Highly Commended National Achievement in School Improvement"

This presentation to our Red-Earth Cluster teachers, was made by the Hon. Julia Bishop - in Parliament House, Canberra. This national recognition of our teachers comes as a result of much dedicated effort, at the local level, to seek greater understanding of how students learn best and to find ways to improve student learning and achievement outcomes..


Over many months, local teachers met in teams from different schools to

participate in projects to find more engaging, challenging and inclusive ways to present curriculum content – with an emphasis on associated technology skills.

Last year's Action Research Expo, presented at Mooroolbark Community Centre was a display of 150 teacher research projects undertaken during 2005. Many of you would have seen that display.

There will be a similar Expo again this year at a date yet to be announced.. Keep a watch out for that expo date and come and check out just what is being done, in our local area, to improve educational opportunities for all.

Well done everybody!



MOOROOLBARK THEATRE GROUP INC.

presents -
the hilarious farce by
Derek Benfield
(By special arrangement with Dominic Pty Ltd)

Off The Hook!

A VDL Award entry
Directed by Arline Myers

MOOROOLBARK COMMUNITY CENTRE
BRICE AVENUE, MOOROOLBARK
15-17 & 21-24 JUNE 2006

Tickets \$15 and Concession \$13
Sherries at 7.30 for 8.00 pm Curtain
Table seating-BYO

Bookings 03 9726 4282

LIVINGTODAY in Mooroolbark

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Editor
Doug Lewis

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Like to Contribute?
If you have a good news story about
people who you believe are an
example to the community, please
contact the editor through our church
office number or by email (as above)

MISSION STATEMENT

To contribute towards and to help to
foster a Growing Community Spirit
within our neighbourhood.

We seek to achieve this by:

- Highlighting the many positives within our community
- Encouraging partnership in community initiatives
- Contributing to the process of identifying and addressing community needs and concerns