

Newsletter

If you haven't already, book in for the:

2021 International Women's Day Breakfast

Almost twelve months ago, we arranged the last big NLCH event of the year. At that time, we had no idea what was lying ahead nor what challenges we would be facing, both collectively and individually. Therefore, it is with great joy and pride we now present to you the 2021 International Women's Day Breakfast.

Our speaker this year is Eleanor Cronin of Kestrel Aviation. Established in 1985, Kestrel Aviation is a leading global provider of specialist aviation services to corporate and government organisations. With a state of the art facility at its base in Mangalore, Kestrel provides helicopter emergency response, remote access transport and advanced pilot training.

At the head of the realm are Eleanor and Ray Cronin. Eleanor has over thirty years experience in the aviation industry and has played a pivotal role in the development of Kestrel over time. Today she oversees the financial and daily office operations, directs Kestrel's quality management systems and also speaks fluent Japanese. Don't miss this unique opportunity to listen to an amazing woman and business owner.

13th of March, 2021

8.00am

Nagambie Rowing Club

To purchase tickets, please visit Anna at the House or pay \$20 direct to Bank account:

Nagambie Lakes Community House Inc.

Account number: 163 305 592, BSB: 633 000

Both women and men are welcome!



Eleanor Cronin, Business Manager/Director of Kestrel Aviation.

Nagambie Lakes Community House
363 High Street, Nagambie, VIC 3608
Phone: 5794 1487, Email: nlchouse32@gmail.com
ABN: 37 645 422 366
Open weekdays 10.00am - 3.00pm

What else is new...



Wheel-chair access to the House

For the NLCH committee and our whole organisation, it is imperative that everyone feels welcome to our House. Therefore, we are very happy to let you know that the front door, as well as the door to the bathroom, have now been equipped with ramps. A big shout-out to committee member Des Mason who worked out all the practicalities.

If you have any further questions about accessibility, please don't hesitate to contact coordinator Anna Close at the House.

Welcome!

GNEACC Cluster meeting coming to Nagambie

As some of you may already know, the Nagambie Lakes Community House is part of Neighbourhood Houses Victoria, often abbreviated NHVIC. Neighbourhood Houses Victoria was founded in 1979 and is today the peak body for close to 400 independent, community-based organisations. As members of NHVIC, we are also part of a more local network called Goulburn North East Association of Community Centres.

Through this network, we have the opportunity to learn, grow and ask any questions we might have. Three times a year, coordinator Anna Close meets up with the respective coordinators/managers within the network and this time it is Nagambie's time to host the meeting.

On Friday the 26th of March, close to 20 different people from all over our region will gather at our new home to share, learn and be inspired. **NHVIC Chief Executive Officer Nicole Battle and Chief Finance Officer Cameron McRae will also be attending.** We are all part of a much bigger family!



Some of the managers and coordinators who will attend the GNEACC meeting in Nagambie.

What else is new...

Primary Care Connect Pop-Up

Wednesday 3rd of March, 2021

10.30am

Nagambie Lakes Community House
363 High Street, Nagambie



Have you or someone you know struggled during the Covid-19 pandemic? Do you wish you knew whom to ask for help or where to get the right information? Do you need some coaching in regards to your **health**, your **finances** or perhaps support relating to **family violence, drugs and alcohol**? Then lock in the 3rd of March in your calendar!

Isobel Gribben from Shepparton Primary Care Connect will be at the House for a “pop up” visit, to answer any questions you might have. She will bring lots of useful information covering all above mentioned areas but also offer **free hand sanitizers** and **face masks** to those who might want it.

Come by the House, have a chat and a cuppa! And if you are unsure about bringing something up which you feel is sensitive, please know we have and will extend the outmost respect for your integrity and privacy.

Welcome to attend our Committee Meetings

The NLCH Committee consists of some truly inspiring and wonderful people. The group meets every third Wednesday of the month, 1.00pm at the Community House. It is at these meetings we discuss different events and initiatives and also try and work out how to best meet the needs of our community.

These meetings have always been open to all our members, but we would just like to pass along a brief reminder that you are welcome to attend!

Next committee meeting:

17th of March 2021

1.00pm

**Nagambie Lakes Community House,
363 High St.**



NLCH President Wendy Keenan.

What else is new...

Opening hours at the House

After what was undoubtedly a crazy year for all of us, the committee is very excited we are now open for business as usual. Our opening hours are Monday through Friday 10.00am to 3.00pm. (With some groups meeting outside of these hours and at different locations, such as for instance the Shared Table Group and the Art Goup.)

Up until now, coordinator Anna Close has worked five days a week, but starting immediately, Anna will be off on Thursdays. The House will still be open as usual, however with different committee members present. (For the time being, it will primarily be Anne Turville who will kindly greet any members and newcomers at the door, this as the Patchwork & Quilting group meet on Thursdays.



NLCH food pantry open to anyone



Are you or anyone you know food insecure? Do you find it difficult to make ends meet some weeks? Don't hesitate to get in touch! The Community House has a food pantry with non-perishable food items and we are more than happy to help you out; as a one off or on a regular basis. Either come by the House during our opening hours or get in touch with Anna Close for a home delivery.

We all go through rough patches and periods in life and at that time it's good to get a little help from your friends. Also, who can manage without a cuppa? (We've got both tea and coffee!)

NLCH Food Pantry

363 High Street

Contact Anna Close on coordinatornlch@gmail.com

What else is new...

Lids4Kids and Aussie Breadtags for wheelchairs

The NLCH Committee has decided that our House is to become a recycling station for Lids4Kids. This means we will soon be collecting lids and breadtags outside the Community House. We are very grateful to the Nagambie Men's Shed who are currently working at making us the boxes where you will soon be able to drop off your collections. One person can't do everything, but we can all do something. The NLCH Committee is happy to contribute to reduce landfill and create a better future for our children.

More information coming shortly on when the collection will start!

About Lids4Kids

Lids4Kids is a nationwide 100% volunteer project to rescue plastic bottle lids from landfill to benefit the environment and kids. You can help by collecting the plastic bottle tops from milk, water and soft-drink bottles that due to their size can't be processed by plastic recycling machines.

In total, there are currently 6,000 different public collection points covering every region in Australia. Thanks to hard working volunteers, the collected lids make their way to Canberra where they are being processed, sorted into colours etc., to be used for instance, to create prosthetic hand prototypes for children.



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) EXTREME HARDSHIP SUPPORT PROGRAM

the
power of
humanity



Emergency financial assistance for people living in Victoria

Who is this program for?

Applicants must meet all of the following:



live in Victoria



be unable to access Commonwealth income support (including JobKeeper, Job Seeker and SRSS)



have zero or very limited income, savings or community support



be a temporary or provisional visa holder, or undocumented migrant

What support is being provided?

Limited cash payments to cover basic needs, such as food, bills and medicine. A single person may receive \$800. Families may receive more.

Red Cross can also provide information about other supports available to people living in Victoria on temporary visas.

For more information and to apply go to
redcross.org.au/vicrelief

If you have questions you can call us on 1800 855 240, including with an interpreter.

What else is new...

Accredited courses with GoTafe

One of the strategies the committee has been discussing for the future of the House is to try and offer more accredited courses in Nagambie. Whether it be to increase employability or help people not having to travel to Seymour or Shepparton, we want to serve our community. We are currently in discussions with GoTafe and will continue to work alongside them to facilitate what there is a need for in our town.

What courses or classes would YOU want to attend? 'Tourism', 'Hospitality', 'Food Handlers' or 'Responsible Service of Alcohol'? Or do you want to learn how to write a better resume or present your best self in an interview? Please check in with Anna at the House if you have any ideas or preferences!



Photo: GoTafe Fryer's Street Shepparton.

Safe to Drive? - Expressions of interest

As we get older, our bodies and brains change. Parts of us get wiser, sassier, more observant and cautious. However, certain health problems also occur gradually, and can therefore be difficult to notice. It is for instance important to have regular check-ups with your doctor to help keep track of your health and identify any issues which might have an impact on your driving. Eyesight changes is one good example of an issue which is good if it's detected early.

When it comes to driving, there are also changes in rules and regulations to consider. Chances are everything is not exactly the same as it was when you got your licence approved and were first let loose on the roads.



Google image.

Is this something you would like to know more about? Perhaps learn from an expert what you should think about, look out for or learn anew? Please contact Anna at the House and express interest in a "Safe to Drive" course. If enough people raise their hand, we will try and facilitate a course like this.

Contact Anna on:
coordinatornlch@gmail.com.

Welcome Group

It was a record-breaking Welcome Group event which took place at Zephyr on the 10th of February. 57 people in total showed up to meet with new and old friends. The event was successfully MCed by Mick O'Connell as Max Dunstone, Peter and Sandra Davies took up attendance. Jeanette Murray keeps leading this group from glory to glory and we are so happy and proud Nagambie can sport such a wonderful meeting place.



*Mick O'Connell
welcoming everyone.*



Max Dunstone, Peter and Sandra Davies.



Terry and Kerry Lucas and Geoff Boadle



*Helen and Dan
Kennedy celebrated
their wedding
anniversary on the
day*



David and Annette Dodson

Welcome Group



Gerri Telford, Bernadette Boadle and Bev Moss. Photo: Kaye Jones.



Rob Van Tillburg, Marg Van Tillburg, Bernadette Boadle and Geoff Boadle. Photo: Kaye Jones.



Phil Close and Cr Reg Dickinson. Photo: Kaye Jones.



Andy and Barbara Horsborough, Beryl and Graham Dukes.



Jess and Mick Photo: Kaye Jones.



A big thank you to ZephyrZ for catering for the evening.

Scrabble and Chess Mates



Our very own games clubs are back at the Community House. If you enjoy playing either Chess or Scrabble, please check* this group out, which normally meets Monday afternoons. If you happen to own your own game of Scrabble, you are welcome to bring it along!

Please contact Mike or Jeanette if you are interested!

**Mike Thomas: 0438 180 163 or
michaelthomas12@bigpond.com**

**Jeanette Murray: 5794 2115 or jmurray771@
bigpond.com**

Welcome!

*See what I did there? ;-)

Walking Group Nagambie 12th of February

After being washed out by heavy rain at the end of January, our Walking Group was able to walk together again, for the first time in 12 months!

Big thanks to local lady Carol Wallis who led the group on a most informative and entertaining Nagambie township walk.

It was a 5km walk from the Community House along High Street and Blayney Lane, along the creek at Elloura to the Recreation Reserve, past the beach, to the Regatta Centre, over Lovers Walk back to our new Community House for a cuppa.

Carol had arranged for Neil Lodding to speak to us when we arrived at the Nagambie Rowing

Club. Thank you again to Carol and to Neil for a wonderful walk.

***Cheers,
Wendy Mason***



Walking Group Shepparton 26th of February

Weather was mild and sunny for our Shepparton walk on the 26th February! We trekked around Lake Victoria, through the wattle and gumtree lined bush alongside the Goulburn River, saw the junction where the Broken River flows into the Goulburn River, viewed the impressive SAM building from ALL angles.

This almost completed building and its magnificent landscaping blends so well in to its new location. Shepparton must be so proud.

WENDY MASON



NEXT WALK:
AVENEL ON FRIDAY, 26TH MARCH
LEAVING THE COMMUNITY HOUSE AT
8.30.
ENQUIRIES TO WENDY MASON
(0438231285)

Art Group

The NLCH Art group is a wonderful self help group consisting of amazing artists who bring along art of their own choice. The group gathered Saturday the 6th of February for their first painting session, and with a short break during lockdown, they are now back at meeting Saturday afternoons at the Primary School Art Rooms.

Feel like wanting to give painting a go? Unsure of where to start or what to do? Come along and check out the Art Group. Sonia Aspinall is the fearless leader and she is more than happy to help you along on your painting journey.

Saturdays

1.00pm - 4.00/4.30pm

(Tea break at 2.30 for critique and business discussions.)

Contact Sonia Aspinall on 0475 429 976 or

soniaaspinall53@gmail.com



Painting by Sonia Aspinall.

Computer Support

Do you have a tablet, smart phone or computer you are struggling to use? Do you want some support in learning a thing or two about your device? Are you stuck on something or has your phone gone completely cray-cray on you? Fear not! Our computer-wiz Sally can help with anything! Phone or email to book in a half hour one-on-one session or bring a friend who has a similar question. (Or take a punt and just turn up!)

Fridays, from 10.00am to 12noon

March 12th

March 19th

April 2nd

April 16th

April 30th



Writing Group

SUCCESS

It happened. Yes, I was dethroned. He Won. He won two out of three games, and still can't get the smile off his face. He woke up with it still on his face this morning and did not try to hide it. Actually, he kept looking at me with this ear to ear smirk saying "Did I tell you I won last night? Now, where are you taking me for breakfast?"



Google image.

Yes, I did take him out for breakfast this morning, and the smile was still on his face as we sat down. He kept asking me "How does it feel to come second?" or "How does it feel to lose?" He told me he knew how I felt as he had been doing it for months and months.

The challenge lasted for just over four hours. Does that give you any idea of the intensity of it? The poor Book is now in tatters. He set the game up and I asked if he had stacked the deck, or in this case tiles. My selection of tiles was abysmal

as I struggled to find a vowel. He lunged ahead early, smile getting bigger, and I could see the ego growing. He was confident. Really confident. I grudgingly praised his tactics and ingenuity, or perhaps it should be his ability to look up and find words to add twenty plus scores at an ever increasing regularity.

He came out the victor in game one by only two points as I clawed my way back. His eyes shone and a smile played around his mouth as he kept saying "A win is a win". I did not have to be told that. He picked up a Z tile to start game two. That tile remained untouched the whole game. You cannot use the Z tile very often to block your opponent. This is his game strategy. Hey, it worked last time. Meanwhile I kept picking up double or sometimes triple letters. Double Ds and Gs are not easily placed.

We were level pegging for a long time. I was able to forge ahead and win comfortably. It was all down to the last game. One all. The stakes were high. Very high. No wine on the table tonight for him. The chocolate did come out, and it had been placed, unknown to me, in the fridge. I devoured my allocation while he searched for a word to use his X. It took a long time. I did not tell him I had the J, Q and Z on my tile holder at the

By Heather Higgins

same time, and only able to add one letter to make another word, meaning I could only pick up one more tile. I was going backwards at an alarming rate.

He kept looking at the score. He could not contain his excitement. "What are you cooking for breakfast? No, think you had better take me out for breakfast." I knew he was correct, as I slipped further and further behind. He won by over sixty points. I admitted defeat.



Google image.

As I drove him to breakfast this morning he said "Perhaps I should retire now. You know, go out while I am on top".

We enjoyed our breakfast and while walking to the car admitted he could not wait until next week. Could he make it two in a row?

Matildas

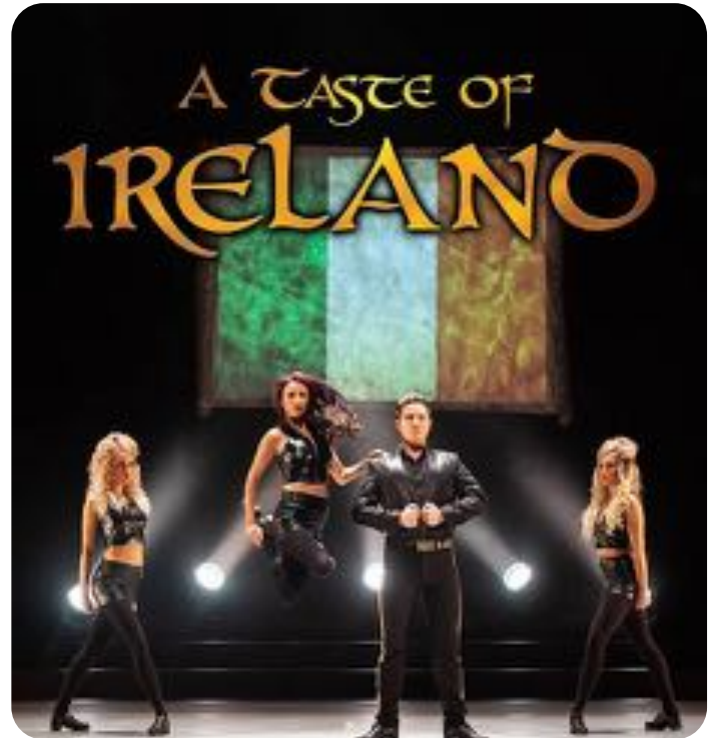
Matildas are our very own cultural explorers! Are you interested in opera, ballet, art, musicals, history or theatre, particularly in the company of good friends, then Matildas is the group for you! With restrictions easing and more events and programs opening up, Matildas are on the go!

The next Matilda Adventure will take place in Shepparton, watching the show "A Taste of Ireland" at Riverlinks. Do you want to attend? Please contact Ilona King on ilonaking2948@gmail.com. If a group of 10 books in before the 14th of March, the price will only be \$49.90. (Compared to full price \$59.90, concession \$54.90)

A TASTE OF IRELAND

4TH OF JUNE, 2021

7.30PM - 9.25PM



"A taste of Ireland" will be Matilda's next show to attend! Everyone is welcome to join in!

Letter from Ilona to all Matildas below:

I hope you all had a good Christmas and a good start to the New Year, or as good as possible. We shall just forget about Last year! I have started looking around for shows we can see this year or next year and there seems to be some that may be of interest.

If you could all check the link below for Riverlinks and let me know if anything is of interest. I thought **A Taste of Ireland** sounded good, also **The World of Musicals** and **Queen Forever**.

Please contact me and let me know what you are interested in and we shall have a great year together.

Ilona King

ilonaking2948@gmail.com

riverlinksvenues.com.au/whats-on



Ilona King, group leader of the Matildas.

Shared Table

After one week's delay due to Covid lockdown, our Shared Table group met up at the new Community House. This was our first get together at this venue, so we were all very excited to experience more space to move around. Truth is the building did not disappoint us. The renovations have been tastefully done, giving our evening a classy environment to enjoy our dishes in.

The theme this month was the letter V, giving us all a lot of scope to work with. The first course consisted of vol au vents, rice paper rolls and savoury cheese crepes. Mostly all vegetarian. This was then followed by a delicious spicy noodle dish and veal scallopini. We were later treated to some amazing desserts, traditional favourites like vanilla slices plus other new taste sensations: Hazelnut Vacherin, a decadent delight of chocolate and two other delicious Venetian styled desserts.

This was all eaten in an atmosphere of congenial friendship and community spirit. If you would like to be part of shared table group please feel free to drop me a line. You will find us all open, supportive, and friendly. Where you can be as adventurous in your choice of recipes or create something as safe as you feel comfortable with.

Elizabeth Branagan
emmeng@hotmail.com

VANILLA SLICE RECIPE

INGREDIENTS:

2 sheets of puff pastry,

300ml milk

600ml cream

2 packets Cottees Vanilla Instant Pudding 100g

Sifted icing sugar for topping

METHOD:

Heat oven to 210C. Bake pastry sheets for 12-15mins or until golden brown. Remove from oven and press each sheet flat with a tray. Leave to cool.

Mix cream and milk until combined. Add Cottees pudding mixes and mix with an electric mixer until mixture is thick and creamy. Spread filling over one pastry sheet then top with remaining sheet of pastry. Chill. Cut into squares with an electric knife. Sprinkle top with icing sugar just before serving. Enjoy!



Welcome Group

The group's March function will be a visit to the Harvest Home Hotel for a daytime meal (brunch, lunch or afternoon tea) probably on Wednesday 24th March.

I am sorry to be able to give you such little information but I am yet to speak with the chef to confirm details. I will email people on the group's data base when I can fill you in.

*Seeya soon,
Jeanette Murray*



Craft Group



In what has affectionately been named "The Drawing Room", our fun-loving Craft Group meet up every Monday morning. If knitting, crocheting, laughing or any other form of crafting is up your alley, please don't hesitate to join this wonderful crew!

**Mondays
10.00am and onwards
Group Leader: Beryl Dukes.**

Tow 'n' Yarn

The meeting on the 19th of February had 14 people turn up, which meant we were within the approved number for the room. Several matters were discussed, some arising from the Community House.

There was a team leaders meeting on 11th of February at which it was confirmed:

- We are covered by the Community House liability insurance when under a CH event, even when on a camp. This has been uncertain in the past. I will amend some of my correspondence accordingly.
- The Community House donation of \$2 per person attending a Tow 'n' Yarn event remains the same for 2021. This \$2 goes into general funds and helps with incidental costs, e.g. cleaning, tea/coffee, etc.
- An incident report must be made for any incident. Tow 'n' Yarn have a procedure and forms for doing this.
- Also, at this meeting, the Community House executives have suggested that it may be a good idea for each group to have an assistant team leader.

As you know, I think it is time our group had a new Team Leader and in fact I have suggested that perhaps the role should change every three years. There were no hands in the air at our last meeting, so perhaps, if anyone had reservations they may be more interested in having a friend join them and doing it together.

Camps/Dates for 2021

The following dates may be subject to change - you will be advised in plenty of time if that happens. It was agreed we will not go to another state this year. The idea of a longer (2 week) touring trip, appears to have support. I am away for most of Ausut so I will plan a trip for probably 21 July/3 August, and at that time of year, to Mildura.

I have gone to Warracknabeal and sorted out some misinformation I had. There is only one

Caravan Park. You arrive, pick your site and a caretaker will come around sometime. Most sites appear to have power and the toilet block was very clean, it is a pleasant spot.

The information centre advised that it had been full with workers from the wind farm but that seems to have finished. I spoke to a couple camped there for a number of days and they said it had been no busier. There were at least +16 sites available. There are no cabins and no camp kitchen, but a good covered BBQ and an open space for a 5 o'clock gather. It is next to the Warrack Motel. It was also advised that Brim is in fact open and has served as the overflow place to go.

**11th - 17th of March
Camp at Warracknabeal**

**Friday 23rd of April, 10.00am
Meeting at the House**

For more information, please contact Max Dunstone on 5794 1868



Max Dunstone, Leader of the Tow 'n' Yarn Group

COMMUNITY HOUSE

ART GROUP

Meet Saturdays at the Nagambie Primary School. 1.00pm - 4.00/4.30pm
(Tea break at 2.30 for critique and business discussions.)

Contact: Sonia Aspinall, nlchouse32@gmail.com, 0427 679 180.

BOOMERANG BAGS

Have not started meeting up again.
Contact: Moya Stewart, 0425 - 796 297
or boomerangbagsnagambie@gmail.com

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Have not started meeting up again. Contact
Di Proud: 5794 1520.

CHESS/GAMES GROUP

Meets most Mondays. For more information
on next get together, please contact
Jeanette Murray on jmurray771@bigpond.
com. or Mike Thomas: michaelthomas12@
bigpond.com

COMPUTER SUPPORT

Upcoming meetings: 12th and 19th of
March. 2nd, 16th and 30th of April. Book in
with Sally and bring your laptop or phone.
Contact Sally Fyfield: 0408 141 969 or
srffyfield@bigpond.com

CRAFT GROUP

Meets Mondays, 10:00am - 12:00pm.
Contact Beryl Dukes: 5794 2829 or
bgdukes@bigpond.com

GARDEN GROUP

Meets Mondays between 10.00am and
12.00 at 7 Prentice Street. Contact Robyn
Northey for more information 0458 147
333.

LAKESIDE LARKS

Meets Thursdays between 6.00pm
and 7.00pm. All welcome! For more
information, please contact Wendy Mason
on: mason.wendy.m@gmail.com.

GROUPS TO JOIN

MATILDAS

Next cultural adventure: A Taste of Ireland,
4th of June, 7.30 - 9.25. To book in and for
more information, contact Group leader:
Illona King on ilonaking2948@gmail.com

PATCHWORK AND QUILTING

Meets Thursdays at Kearns Centre.
10:00am - 3:00pm. Contact: Pat Moroney,
gmoroney3@bigpond.com

SHARED TABLE

Meets every third Wednesday evening of
the month, sharing a theme inspired meal.
Next theme: "All things Irish!" Interim contact
for March only: Alice Long: alice.long1@
bigpond.com

TOW 'N' YARN

Next camp, 11th to 17th of March, to
Warracknabeal. Next group meeting, Friday
23rd of April at the Community Hosue.
Contact Max Dunstone: 5794 1868.

UKULELE GROUP

Meets Wednesday mornings at 9.30am
at the Community House. Contact Robyn
Northey: robynalice2004@yahoo.com.au

WALKING GROUP

Next walk will be in Avenel, Friday 26th of
March. Leave from the Community House at
8.30. Contact: Wendy Mason,
mason.wendy.m@gmail.com, 0438 231 285.

WELCOME GROUP

For new and old friends. Next meeting
Wednesday Probably 24th of March, to
Harvest Home in Avenel.
Contact Jeanette: 5794 2115 or
jmurray771@bigpond.com

WRITING GROUP

Meets every second Tuesday of the Month.
10:00am - 12.00pm. Contact Vonnie
Deering: vonnie.deering@bigpond.com

Summer photos

A big thank you to everyone who submitted beautiful, fun and inspiring summer photos on our NLCH Facebook page. A call went out to share some summer memories and below you will see the photos submitted.

It might very well have been the coldest summer in 19 years, but there was still so much sunshine, love and fun happening!



Photo: Denise Smith.



Photo: Denise Smith.



Photo: Denise Smith.



Photo: Zee Coral Evely



Photo: Judy Macdonald



Photo: June DeBono



Photo: Donna Keenan.

From the Coordinator's desk

It's official. I am now closer to 50 than I am 40. I know this, not just due to plain mathematics, but because my dad has kindly pointed it out to me. Often. (Bless his heart.) I don't know about you, but I like having my birthday. I think it's a good time to be reminded of your blessings and a great opportunity to celebrate life. See, often I find it too easy getting stuck in the gridlock of chores, obligations and appointments. Dog needs to go to the vet, child 2 wants a haircut, child 3 REALLY NEEDS a haircut, but refuses, child 2 has an orthodontist appointment, child 3 has got a cold, all children have homework, cat is overdue for his vaccinations, the electrician needs to be called, Shire wants our new address, blood pressure medicine is low, there's no milk, oh, and then there's cricket and dirty bathrooms and... I don't need to go on do I?

But then every now and again, I get a little push in the side which reminds me to get out and smell the roses. Birthdays often do that to me. For this one day of the year I think it's ok to splurge a little bit. To go out for dinner and have breakfast in bed. To listen to people say nice things to you and just soak up the love. To receive gifts which someone's put thought and effort into organising. To stop. To breathe. To feel.

When it's my birthday, I also often think about my paternal grandpa Lennart. Lennart died the week after mum and dad got married, and seeing I was born one week and nine months after that same wedding day, (read night) I actually never got to meet him. Come to think of it, it does seem rather strange, seeing I feel like I know him almost as well as I know my own dad.

Lennart grew up in a small community in the northern parts of Sweden where his ancestors (and mine) had lived for at least 500 years. Although his family would have undoubtedly been one of the wealthiest in the area, there was not an ounce of pride or conceit in my grandpa. Everyone I've ever met, describes him as one of the most gentle, humble, kind, soft-spoken, caring and sacrificial souls whom ever graced the earth. Growing up, Lennart decided to leave the

comforts of his home to become a missionary in the French colony of Congo. There, he risked his life as he, (and his red cross nurse wife) continued a lifestyle of servanthood and love.

With this in mind, it's easy to imagine an almost ascetic person. One who doesn't indulge but rather deprives himself for the sake of others. Immersed in the hardships and sufferings of the world, he certainly wouldn't have found many reasons to throw parties. It was Lennart's sister Ingrid, who many, many years ago made me realise the opposite was true when it came to my grandpa. She described how Lennart, even as a young boy, used to love celebrations. In fact, he took every opportunity to instigate them. Using scissors and paper, he would cut out garlands and hang them in ceiling of the homestead, proceed to bake something, plan games and then invite the whole family to join in on the fun. Not necessarily because it was someone's birthday, but because life needed a bit of sparkle.

When I later watched a silent Super 8 film where my grandpa was attaching cut off palm branches onto a pole to create a Christmas tree, somewhere in the heart of Africa, I couldn't help but smile. Yes Lennart was a servant. Yes, he was a hard worker, sacrificing his own comfort for others, but he was also full of joy and jubilation. He understood that sometimes we all need a bit of glitter, glamour and cake to tackle the gridlock grey.

***At your service,
Anna Close***



Photo: Love by Lou Photography