

WOT'S LIFE

EDITION 7, 2012



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Frances O'Brien (National Affairs), Rebecca Irvine & Eleanor Taylor (Culture), Duncan Wallace (Film), Pia Salvatore (Music), Michelle Li (Creative Space), Benny Dimas & Carmel Wallis (Theatre), Lewis Gurr & Hilary Bowman (Science), Brent Connolly.

Thanks

Michael Leunig for designing our cover, the allure of red wine in the sun, which has kept us motivated throughout this entire issue; the mysterious former Medicine Faculty fridge, for honouring us and our beer with its convenience and coldness; family for understanding why we haven't spoken to them for a week (Happy Birthday Cassie!); friends for keeping us sane (we hope).

No Thanks

Extremely dodgy electronics, JB Hi Fi, Melinda's sole for giving way (she will always love those boots), Jake in general, poorly-timed rain storms, and an entire weekend formatting the Election Guide.

Correction

In Edition 6, the articles "Photos In Focus" and "The Gym Junkie: Obsessed Or Focussed?" were attributed to Jordana Hyams. The correct author is Jordane Hyams. Our most sincere apologies to Jordane for the error.

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Melinda Bladier

Bren Carruthers

This month I was extremely lucky to be able to speak with Michael Leunig, who has very generously designed our front cover. During Leunig’s time in the *Lot’s Wife* office in the late ’60s, the paper was endearingly referred to as *Wot’s Life*, reflecting a typical student cheek and also the fact that, during our university years, many of us are preoccupied with the big questions.

We chose to recreate this old title for the edition, and the timing could not be more fitting. With student elections upon us, madness is due to descend on the Campus Centre. Whilst for many students this election week entails avoiding the Campus Centre at all costs, I strongly urge everyone to vote. Believe it or not, the group running your Student Association is important. If you don’t know what the MSA is, that’s a problem in and of itself, and probably an indication that the MSA should be taking greater efforts to promote itself in a system that is becoming more and more transactional and less focused on a cultural experience of university.

Take the time to pick up an election guide and read the candidate statements. If you have questions talk to the people campaigning – they’re not as scary as they look. *Wot’s Life* is an apt question when you consider people’s motivations in running for election, and the policy platforms and ideologies to which they subscribe. It is also relevant to our understanding of what our time at university should entail.

If the sea of green, blue and yellow shirts does get too much, take a moment to enjoy the ducks. In a world gone mad Leunig tells us that there is still place for whimsy and laughter. When the rhetoric of politicians and journalists alike becomes omnipresent and oppressive, there is an element of humanity in which we can confide, in the form of feathers, webbed feet and a propensity for quacking.

Our societal perceptions are largely built on dualities; right, wrong, good, bad, black, white. In an exponentially complex world, simplifying the major issues is almost a necessity. But at what cost? Richard Plumridge’s article in this edition of *Lot’s Wife* is a great demonstration of how complex issues can be monstrously distorted by simplification; the public opinion poll distills the unique perceptions of individuals into simple quantitative analysis - digestible Gillard v Abbott numbers arranged in a pretty picture for your enjoyment.

We’re provided with endless examples. In the debate over Australian refugee policy, questions that should be asked about who, why and how have devolved into a simple “in or out”; some might say that this separation from firm facts and human faces did nothing but contribute to the recent decision to resume off-shore processing.

Yet these simplifications, these tools in coping with our daily lives, are fallacies. They betray us. They do nothing but cloud our most basic judgments.

As you’ll read in Cam Peter’s fantastic article featuring trans-activist Sally Goldner, gender identity is anything but a duality of male and female. Michelle Li’s disturbing article observes the complexity and pain behind of one of society’s most fundamental yes or no questions: sexual consent. And as a scientific practice demonised by some activist groups, Lewis Gurr’s piece on Genetically Modified crops is an example of how, rather than simply being good or bad, the intrinsic value of an innovation is largely determined by the human hands that guide it.

Only through compassion, empathy, knowledge and reason can their true nature of these issues be understood. Only through understanding can we move forward as a society.

So I present this edition of *Lot’s Wife* to you with a polemic attached. Destroy the dualities. Disregard the preconceived notions of good and bad, of right and wrong. Postpone the yes and no until you have absorbed the who, studied the why, and analysed the how. Think critically. This is what a University education attempts to instill in us.

Most importantly, take this method of thinking and carry it with you throughout life. Learn to observe the light and shadow of daily existence. Life is too vivid, too colourful, to be rendered in black and white.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

To sing out praises, or air you complaints about Lot’s Wife, our articles, and all things Monash, email msa-lotswife@monash.edu.

Dear Lot’s Wife,

In response to ‘Right To Peaceful Protest Upheld In Max Brenner Case’, in Lot’s Wife Edition 6, 2012.

The US occupies over 70 million people in Iraq and Afghanistan, indefinitely imprisons people without charge, can assassinate its own citizens with no due process on the orders of the president, targets funerals with drone strikes, is engaged in a war on whistleblowers like Julian Assange, and embraces and arms some of the world’s cruellest despotic regimes. Likewise, China brutally crushes freedom of speech, jails dissidents, occupies Tibet, persecutes religious minorities including Christians and the Falun Gong, suppresses ethnic minorities such the Uyghur in western China, and tortures opponents of the regime. With that in mind, I have one simple question: why don’t we read about Socialist Alternative (SA) protesting outside American or Chinese owned businesses – only about them protesting outside Israeli owned businesses? Are Israeli wrongdoings somehow graver than American or Chinese wrongdoings? Obviously not, and it is for this precise reason that the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement which calls for a boycott of all Israeli goods is nothing short of being blatantly hypocritical.

Members of SA are nothing more than ‘chardonnay socialists’ who have no qualms about discriminating against Israeli businesses as it does not impinge on their standard of living. It is easy for them to avoid purchasing Israeli owned chocolate or skin cream businesses but nigh on impossible to avoid purchasing American-owned and Chinese made products. SA members continue to purchase iPhones

and Mac computers even though Apple proudly offers US soldiers discounts to their products. Is offering a US soldier serving in Iraq a discount on his iPhone somehow less supportive of an armed forces than Max Brenner donating chocolate bars to Israeli soldiers? Until SA begins a boycott of American technology, Chinese made clothing, Saudi Arabian oil or for that matter the products made by companies that pay taxes to any government which oppresses human rights, then their boycott of Israeli businesses will remain pathetically hypocritical.

Benjamin Needleman
Political Officer, Monash Jewish Students’ Society

Dear Lot’s Wife,

From my understanding, by the time that your next edition goes to print, R U OK Day, held on September 13, sadly will probably be a distant memory for most people.

The aims of the Foundation are admirable. In their words, “By raising awareness about the importance of connection and providing resources throughout the year, the R U OK? Foundation aims to prevent isolation by empowering people to support each other through life’s ups and downs.” It’s an important aspect of well-being which is thoroughly deserving of significant attention.

However, as someone who has been personally touched by the significant anguish that comes from an untreated mental health issue, I feel the need to express some concern. There is always the possibility that some members of the public can be under the misunderstanding that an annual event such as this is

a quick-fix solution to mental health issues. It simply isn’t. Mental health issues can occur and dissipate at any time. Your friend, who may be in perfect spirits on one day, may well be in need of attention and support within a matter of days.

If you’ll allow me a little space in your letters columns, I’d like to take up an opportunity to reinforce the sentiment of the R U OK? Foundation to your readers. A symbolic gesture such as R U OK Day is admirable, but only vigilance and support across all 365 days of the year will ensure the happiness and well-being of our friends and loved ones.

Leigh Castles

AN OPINION ON THE WRONGS AND WRONGS OF PUBLIC OPINION

Richard Plumridge

“I love democracy,” says Supreme Chancellor Palpatine in Star Wars Episode II, “I love the Republic.” While more eloquent words have been spoken about democracy by catatonic three-year-olds, the overarching sentiment – about the good of democracy – holds true. Democracy is, after all, the will of the people. But what about when “the people” are wrong?

There are inherent risks in criticising the collective opinion of the masses. One runs the risk of being labelled “elitist”, a trendy “effete” or – best of all – a naysayer; a contrarian. Even referring to the idea of “the masses” carries with it ideological baggage. Going against public opinion is like swimming against the tide, no? Well, “the people” *are* wrong more often than not. Now I probably risk the wrath of the masses as I mount my high horse – a creature that should not be stabled, but as Gore Vidal once said “rethered conveniently near”.

Liberal-democracy is one of the great conceptions of man – yes, most of those responsible for it were men. What is usually less noted is that it is the product of two contradictory ideas: the liberal idea of individual rights, of the rule of law and property, and the democratic tradition of the rule of the people – mass opinion. During an election, however, citizens are not asked for their opinions, but rather to select from a suite of candidates

Image: Richard Plumridge

“Even referring to the idea of ‘the masses’ carries with it ideological baggage.”

to represent them in parliament.

It is in between elections that public opinion is elevated to an almost sacred status. It is in this period that a ground-dwelling creature named the “pollster” comes into its own. This is a creature who is paid vast sums of money to find out what people are thinking, conflating popular wisdom with what is actually right.

These pollsters gauge opinion on global warming as if planet-wide weather patterns are contingent

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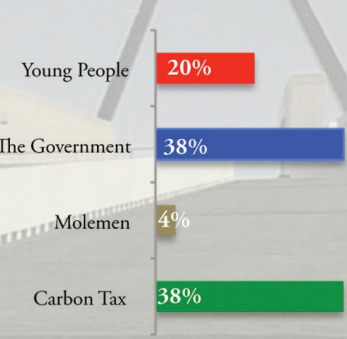
TWO-PARTY PREFERRED

Percentage support	Aug 12-13	Aug 13-14
LABOR	52	50
COALITION	48	50
PRIMARY VOTE		
LABOR	38	35
COALITION	41	44
TONY JONES	14	14
OTHERS	7	7

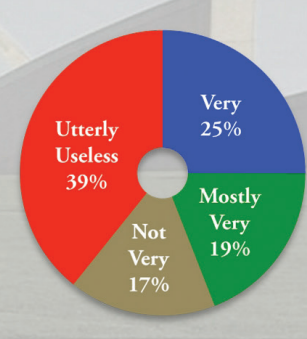
CAKE OR DEATH?

Percentage support	Aug 12-13	Aug 13-14
CAKE	57	50
DEATH	43	50

Who is to blame for everything?



How useful are colourful graphs?



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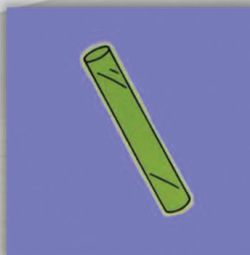
Julia Gillard

22%



Tony Abbott

23%



Inanimate Carbon Rod

55%

These polls were conducted by trained carrier pigeons in all states of Australia. The data has been fiddled with endlessly. This survey is based on 5 interviews among people who claimed to be voters. The maximum margin of error is plus or minus the survey.

on the consent of a sample of 1000 people aged 18 or more. At the height of Kevin07 fever, a Lowy Institute poll found climate change was considered by the electorate to be the equal most important foreign policy goal for the Federal Government. By 2009, it dropped down to seventh position out of a possible ten goals. Yet somehow climate change continues unabated, unaffected by the whims of popular opinion. How rude. What’s next, a poll on the colour of grass? Because if 90 per cent of people believe the grass is red, it certainly makes it so.

In *The American Democrat* (1838), James Fenimore Cooper argued it is a “besetting vice of democracies to substitute public opinion for law. This is the usual form in which masses of men exhibit their tyranny”. If public opinion was reflected in the daily operations of society, prosecutors in Australia and in Britain would be still be able to seek the death penalty (55 per cent). Foreign companies would not be able to purchase Australian farmland (63 per cent), despite the farmers’ views that it is vital for the survival of Australian agriculture. Migration would likely be

limited to those immigrants with “similar values” to Australians (57 per cent), even though defining said values is difficult for Australians when asked (91 per cent believe a “fair go” is important...whatever that *actually* is). In a touch of American-style jingoism, saluting the flag and singing the national anthem would also be compulsory at school (94.1 per cent).

“Pollster’... a creature who is paid vast sums of money to find out what people are thinking, conflating popular wisdom with what is actually right.”

Historically, public opinion does not fare well. We rightly find many of the opinions and attitudes of our forebears discomforting. A 1939 poll in the United States found 53 per cent of non-Jewish Americans

thought Jews should be “restricted”; only 39 per cent of Americans felt Jews should be treated like other people. Remember, this was in pre-war USA, not part of the Greater German Reich. As Christopher Hitchens put forward, “Public opinion is often wrong, mob opinion is almost always wrong, [and] religious opinion is wrong by definition”.

Society’s obsession with polling virtually every subject imaginable means public opinion is stuck in its own feedback loop. While the Alan Joneses of the world claim they discuss issues that reflect public opinion, in reality they *inform* it, broadcasting their own biases by presenting them as public opinion.

While most of us agree that democracy is preferable to other forms of government (60 per cent - alarmingly only 39 per cent of 18 to 29 years olds feel this way), the fact remains that public opinion, while interesting in itself, should not be the yardstick for representative democracy. So don’t be afraid to mount Vidal’s high horse now and again. In anywhere from 10 to 1000 years, your opinion may be proved correct.

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GRATTAN INSTITUTE PROPOSES CUTS TO UNIVERSITY SUBSIDIES: COALITION TAKE NOTICE

Emma Nobel

Like thousands of students enrolled at Australian universities, Monash University Music student Francis Macindoe has a HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme) debt. Living away from home with a finite income, Francis admits it can be difficult to find novel ways to stay afloat.

“I’ve been sleeping on my sister’s couch, sleeping on a buddy’s floor... I couch surf; you could say that... I’m living off \$50 dollars a week, so \$20 bucks goes on cigarettes and then I’ve got \$30 bucks to go wild on,” he says.

Francis will be one of thousands of tertiary students affected by proposed cuts to university subsidies, which were recently suggested by the Grattan Institute Federal Government think tank.

Graduate Winners: Assessing the Public and Private Benefits of Higher Education, a report compiled by the Grattan Institute’s Higher Education Program Director Andrew Norton, suggested that government funding of tertiary courses should be reduced, and that students should be required to pay more. The findings of the report propose that university students should be willing to invest more money into their courses. The rationale for this is that they are likely to earn a higher income after graduating than someone without a tertiary qualification. On average, subsidies account for 60% of the cost of a domestic student undertaking a university degree. The study suggests that the Federal Government should cut up to \$3 billion dollars of its spending on higher education subsidies.

Australian students already pay a larger percentage for higher education than many of their OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) counterparts, with only Japan and the United States charging more for tuition fees in a study of 18 countries. The OECD’s findings also report that higher tuition fees can put pressure on students, particularly low-income earners, in the absence of a robust scheme of public subsidies.

Critics of the report argue that it is irrelevant for universities with a large percentage of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, or those who are struggling financially. Increased financial requirements on students would effectively bar many from pursuing higher education because of an inability to support themselves while studying.

Francis knows well the stresses and instability that financial hardship can bring.

“It’s pretty crazy; I’m always on my toes. I’m always moving around so it’s like everything is really hectic and fast paced. It’s: What am I doing? Where am I eating? Where am I sleeping tonight? When am I going to practice? What am I going to do?”

Andrew Norton writes that, under the current Higher Education Government Subsidy Scheme, graduates stand to benefit far more than the general public, gaining quality employment and earning a higher income. “Tuition subsidies therefore merely redistribute income to students and graduates. The general public – particularly those who do not go to university – are worse off... Given these large benefits, and with the HELP student loan scheme in place, most students would take their courses regardless of the size of the subsidy.”

“People go to university anyway, and effectively society will still get the same benefits... people are driven primarily by their interests, and there are very stable interests in humanities and preforming arts, even though they have pretty poor financial outcomes compared to other courses,” he says.

Chief Executive of Universities Australia, Belinda Robinson, said in a recent interview with Radio National that the findings of the Grattan Institute’s report suffered from a narrow scope.

“I think one of the key issues here is the very narrow definition that the Grattan Report has applied in terms of the public good... I can’t remember a time when a policy maker or politician has referred to a slightly higher level of volunteering by graduates, or a

stronger civic engagement, being used as an argument for supporting public investment in universities.”

“The idea that student decisions are insensitive to price, there’s a little bit of an inconsistency there, because the report ultimately recommends that there is a case to be made for a public subsidy for some courses where lifetime earnings may be low, but on the other hand is using the argument that we’re insensitive to price when it comes to making decisions about the courses we choose,” she said.

The idea that higher fees will not deter students is echoed by Francis, who says he will stay at university even if fees are increased. Despite this, rising fees will do nothing to ease his financial difficulties, and will likely lead to him having increased debt in the future; disadvantage is hard to escape.

“I’m not going to let the government step in front of what I want to do, and if they want to try and do that... I’m going to find a way around it. It would not stop me from going to university.”

“I mean, if they want to kill the arts, they’ll fucking kill the country,” he says.

The report predicts that the debt created by taxpayer-funded higher education tuition subsidies will grow to \$7 billion dollars by 2015, as holding a bachelor degree or equivalent becomes necessary in more job sectors.

It has been suggested that the Coalition has begun to pursue the idea of a 25 per cent increase to university HECS fees, with those in favour arguing that the rise would fail to have a negative impact because students are not forced to begin repaying their HECS debt until their incomes reach \$50,000 per year.

The inventor of the HECS loan scheme, Bruce Chapman, agreed that a rise in fees would be unlikely to deter future students from undertaking an undergraduate degree, but also argues the difficulty of measuring the public benefits of subsidising tertiary education.

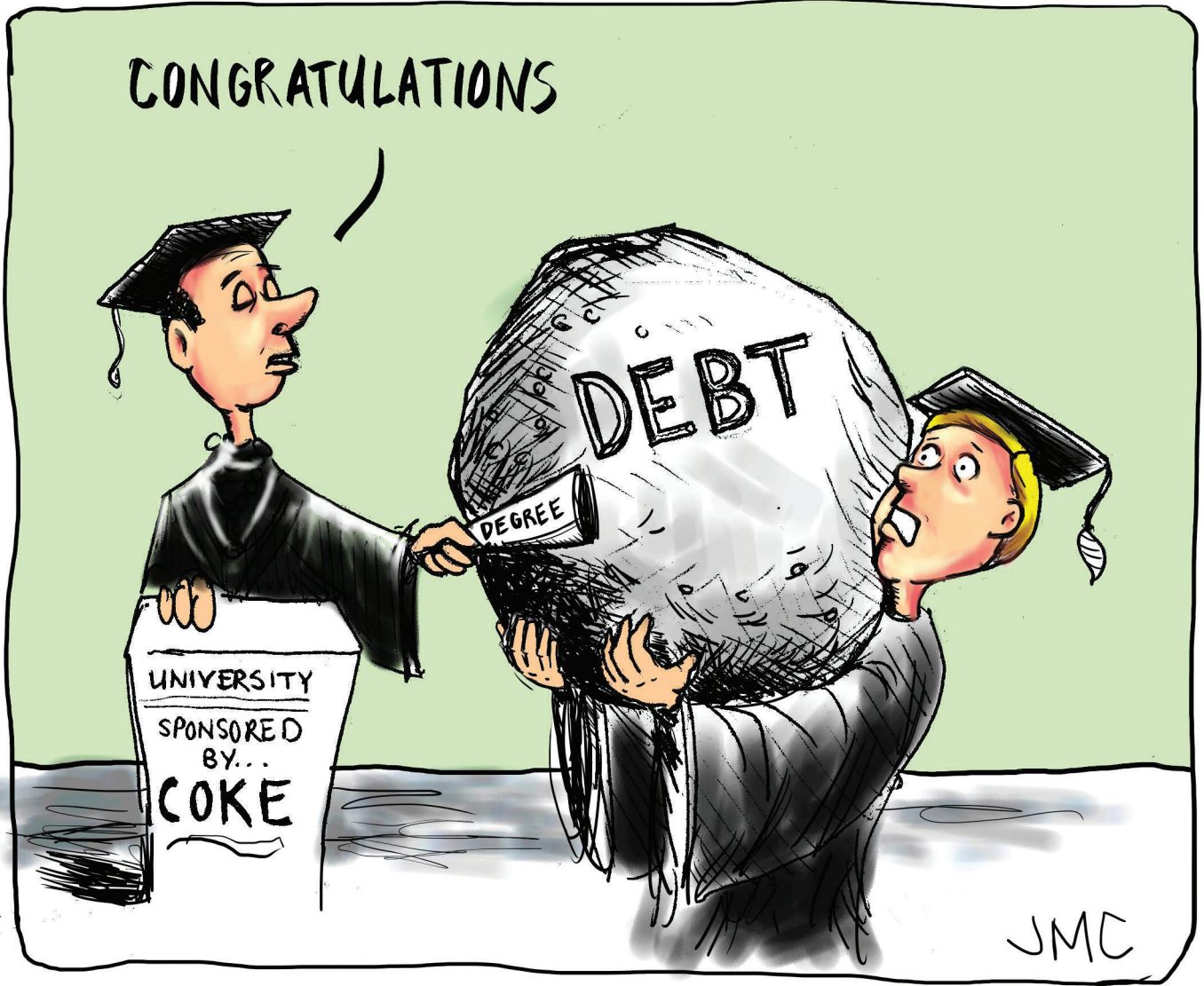


Image:
Josh McCrimmon

“The evidence is universities could increase the cost of degrees by 25 per cent and there would be no impact on student enrolments,” he said.

The Coalition is also said to be deliberating reintroducing the capping of university places, a move which could result in a loss of 200,000 student admissions. The Labor Party has been responsible for the creation of 150,000 extra tertiary students since removing the cap five years ago.

The Grattan Institute’s report argues that individuals can and are willing to pay more for a degree. When universities were last permitted to raise student fees, a number of tertiary education providers raised this to the maximum 25 per cent increase allowance; the number of university students continued to surge upwards regardless.

The proposal to deregulate fees is seen by many as a slippery slope, which could lead to allowing universities the freedom to increase student fees at leisure.

Fresh in everyone’s minds should be the 2010 United Kingdom protests, a series of student-led demonstrations against the controversial hike of higher education fees. The more recent London Riots of 2011 were found by the Riots Communities and Victims Panel, an independent body set up by the Federal Government to understand why the riots occurred, to be the latest in an ongoing saga of a generation of disenchanted youths. Young people’s employment and education prospects are suffering after the GFC, with fewer entry-level jobs available and substantial cuts to educational benefits and subsidies. This comes in spite of Conservative UK Prime Minister David Cameron’s continued insistence that the riots were caused by a surge in criminality, materialism and opportunism, rather than as the result of widespread social issues like deprivation, the rising cost of living and unemployment.

Compared with Britain, Australia fared relatively well in the aftermath of the GFC. But with recent

TAFE cuts readily being rolled out and dire predictions of rising tertiary fees having caught the eye of conservative politicians, it isn’t difficult to consider similar scenes here. Instead of burnt out cars in Bristol there will be smashed storefront windows in Carlton. Clashes between police and rioters in Tottenham will be mass sit-ins at Federation Square.

When university becomes so expensive that it is inaccessible, or that debt burdens graduates to the extent that it inhibits the entirety of their working lives, we can say it is no longer viable. Is that time now?

Frances asks me if I want to hear a joke. “What’s the difference between a music graduate and a pizza?” He pauses. “A pizza can feed a family of four.”

VIVA LA HUMANITÉS

Florence Roney

Open Day at La Trobe University Bundoora on August 26th was a tumultuous affair, with students staging vocal protests throughout the day. Over 19,000 high school students, their parents, prospective students and other visitors were on campus for the open day, a record turnout for the university. However, the event took a dramatic turn with visitors bearing witness to vocal student dissent. The announcement in June of a massive restructuring of the Humanities and Social Sciences faculty, effective from 2013, prompted the outcry.

Under the new scheme, the number of subjects offered in the faculty will be cut in half from 913 to 400 in 2013. The University has deemed entire subject areas too unpopular to run; consequently the number of humanities majors available will be slashed from 29 to 13. 42 staff members will concurrently be made redundant. These changes come in spite of La Trobe's strong history in the arts and humanities; in the 2005 Times Higher Education Supplement, La Trobe was ranked in the top 25 universities in the world in this area, and third in Australia. The University has revealed the changes as a means of closing its current \$4.3 million gap in revenue, and bringing the faculty back to surplus.

The new model will also see the introduction of the so-called dual major, whereby students will be able to study two disciplines taught in an integrated style, rather than being separated by different sub-faculties. This proposal has worried staff for a number of reasons. La Trobe National Tertiary Education Union president Virginia Mansell Lees has said that it will limit access to important specialty subjects, impacting on post-graduate study options. It is this cross-institutional teaching that will allow for the announced staff cuts.

LaTrobe Vice-Chancellor Professor John Dewar has defended the changes, saying that the new model will "streamline" courses. He argues that "traditional arts degrees are no longer sufficiently enticing nor relevant to school leavers and employers alike, and students have been voting, in effect, for a smaller

humanities faculty with their feet". With student demand in decline and a "very high" number of subjects offered in relation to the number of enrolments, these cuts are financially necessary according to Professor Dewar. They will also provide much needed financial respite for the university.

In the lead up to Open Day, attempts were made to quell prospective protests, including a ban on all non-registered demonstrations. However, student protesters emerged in force on the key promotional day for the University, marching around campus and clearly ignoring the ban. Professor Dewar was targeted, with protesters chanting, "John Dewar, hey, hey, how many jobs have you cut today?" Events took a dramatic and more aggressive turn when Professor Dewar was found by protestors and chased into a building; he was then pushed into a study room by security. Protesters outside barricaded him in the room, demanding answers on how far cuts to education would go.

Despite having to make a quick exit through tunnels under the building, Professor Dewar said he supports student protests as they "add color and movement to life on campus." However, some students are facing suspension or even expulsion as a result of the protests.

Students and staff alike are banding together to fight the cuts. Alongside multiple protests, including those at open day and a joint staff-student protest at a University Council meeting, a petition has been circulated – it has nearly 2000 signatures to date. The La Trobe Student Union has called the cuts short sighted and ill conceived, saying they "will do irrevocable damage to a faculty that La Trobe University once prided itself on". Another student group 'Fight Back' has countered the argument that there is any faculty

deficit, claiming the University's annual report cited a surplus of \$84 million dollars in 2011.

With dissidence escalating, the University has been forced to act. In a backflip, statements have been released saying that the Indonesian, Linguistics, Art History and Gender, Sexuality & Diversity subject areas will continue to run, despite prior suggestions that they would be slashed under the new model. Similarly, staff cuts have been (if marginally) scaled back from a planned 50 to 37 by 2013, with another four to follow by 2015. While these changes should be seen as a victory for protesters, many are demanding the cutbacks be completely abolished.

The funding of educational institutions is an increasingly dominant issue, with recent reforms to Victorian TAFE funding coinciding with the changes at La Trobe. These changes are overwhelmingly driven by financial concerns. It appears that the focus of the University administration at La Trobe, other institutions and indeed the Victorian Government has moved away from emphasis on world-class education and more towards cost cutting and profit margins.

As one angry student asked, in the front line at the La Trobe protests, "How far will these cuts to our education go?" In the current climate, it is hard not to question which university will be next. Are the La Trobe protests only a taste of things to come?

To sign the petition against the staff cuts and restructuring at La Trobe go to <http://tinyurl.com/cuts-to-huss>.



GAS HUB DEVELOPMENT DISGRACEFUL

Róisín Mortimer

The name James Price Point is starting to ring bells across the country. Located 40km north of Broome, the point has been proposed for the largest gas processing plant in the world. Petroleum giant Woodside and WA Premier Colin Barnett are leading a formidable team of joint venture partners - BP, BHP, Shell, and Mitsui/Mitsubishi - in the proposal for a Browse Natural Liquefied Gas Hub as part of the Premier's grandiose Kimberley Development Project. The building of the gas hub would spell the destruction of James Price Point, which is a unique ecosystem and home to the Goolarabooloo and Jabba Jabba people. It would also waste significant sums of taxpayers' money in the construction of a new processing site when viable alternatives are already in operation in the Pilbara.

James Price Point is of enormous cultural and ecological significance. It is part of an Aboriginal song line which encapsulates Indigenous history, geography, culture, song and law. It is also a calving ground for the world's largest population of humpback whales – there have been hundreds of reported sightings within the past few months – and home to newly discovered Spinner Dolphins, endangered Hawksbill turtles, dugongs and incredible dinosaur footprints. The support Woodside's proposal has achieved from Barnett and industry is huge. However, there has been huge community protest against the planned development with many arrests in recent months, and recent visits by leading whale activists Sea Shepherd and former Greens leader Bob Brown to vouch their support.

The proposal to cover the Point with a gas hub about 25 times the size of Melbourne's CBD was recently granted environmental approval by the WA Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), and is now awaiting further assessment by the Federal Environment Minister at the end of the year. It would appear that Barnett's main motivation for choosing James Price Point for the hub is that it would create a

prime gateway to open up the entire Kimberley area to further mining and gas developments.

Given the scale of the project one would expect a robust and comprehensive environmental impact assessment based on sound science, however it is clear this was not the case. The Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) prepared by the State Government, which formed the basis of the assessment, was recommended to be peer-reviewed. However, this failed to take place for the majority of the science, leaving little confidence in the SAR. Furthermore, when the EPA made their assessment, four of the five EPA board members had to withdraw from the decision making process due to conflict of interest, leaving a "quorum" of one.

Recent reports from Citibank advisers have also found that costs could be reduced by \$15 billion if the gas was shipped to the Pilbara area, where it would receive a rate of return 4% higher. Leading analysts employed by Merrill Lynch and JP Morgan have also expressed doubts. Mr Barnett has justified the significant associated costs by citing plans which would generate economic revenue through further destruction of the area's invaluable and irreplaceable ecological and cultural assets.

The Kimberley is home to thousands of plant and animal species, many highly specialised, vulnerable, threatened or endangered, including the Golden bandicoot, the Scaly tailed possum, and the Kimberley Rock and Kimberley Cave bats. The iconic exposed sandstones overlaid with the reddish sandy plains characteristic to the region are covered with numerous fossil marine shells and a number of dinosaur footprints. More than thirty Aboriginal tribes remain in the region today, each with their own language and unique cultural practices. Evidence has been found of Aboriginal habitation as far back as 28,000 years on the Dampier Peninsula (the greater region of James Price Point), and 40,000 years elsewhere in the Kimberley.

With the Tarkine in Tasmania (home to the last

surviving Tasmanian Devils), Cape York Peninsula and the Kimberley all up for grabs, it seems nowhere is sacred anymore. Minerals and gas have become the currency of our generation. The James Price Point development is the most recent in a wave of mining proposals set to wipe out Australia's outback; as such, stopping this gas hub could be the crucial tipping point for our generation to take our future, and Australia's ecological health, into our own hands and away from the near-sighted, mineral-loving power brokers who falsely claim to have our best interests at heart.

With moneyed executives making the calls about our landscape, the future is scary, and increasingly full of giant holes to be fallen into. There is little political or economic capital certainty when it comes to preserving places like James Price Point, and little sign of meaningful investment in innovative industries. Is this what we want? A country covered with the scars of short-sighted political decisions that an all too trusting next generation was too comfortable to question?

There are viable alternatives to the Woodside project. Gas could be piped to existing facilities in the Pilbara, or floating gas technology could be utilised. Furthermore, Chevron's recent withdrawal from the project and the collapse of BHP's Olympic Dam project suggest that it's not yet too late to implement an alternative. If we're serious about protecting our nation's future we need to stop seeking short-sighted economic windfalls, and look at the broader picture. James Price Point is an asset to Australia, and one which should be worthy of protection for its cultural significance, uniquely beautiful environment and the habitat it provides for wildlife. Mr Barnett needs a big wake up call, as do Tony and Julia. We need James Price Point to become an election issue to signal that we, the next generation, do not want to live in a landscape devoid of life.

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IN CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL LEUNIG

MELINDA BLADIER SPEAKS WITH THE ARTIST
ABOUT CREATIVITY, POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

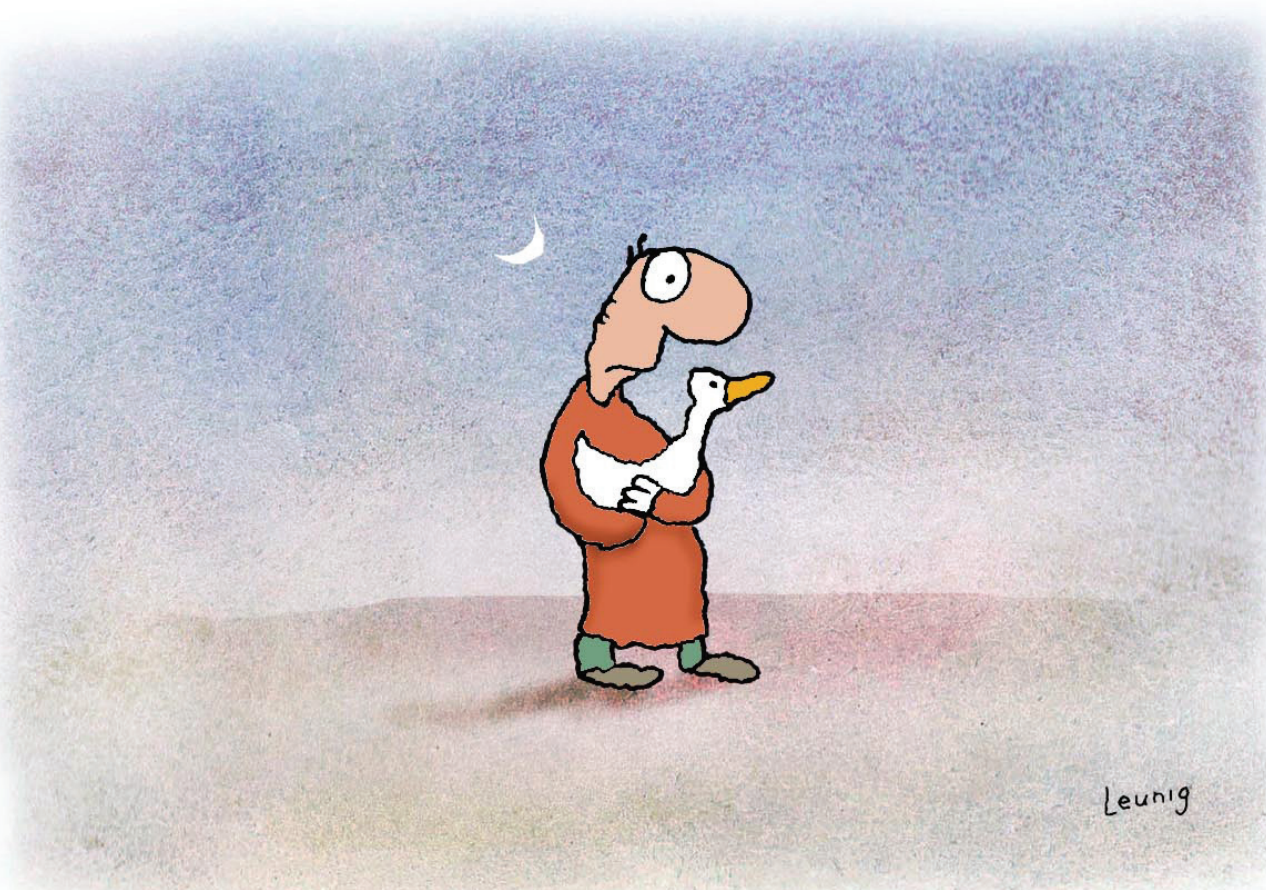
“There’s a great idea of what an artist does in my mind, and that is to express what is repressed. That is what is repressed personally, what is repressed in their culture, and what is repressed politically. The artist is interested in what is below the surface – the truth.”

For many Australians, Michael Leunig expresses what they cannot. His cartoons are instantly recognisable and touch upon elements of the human psyche in an inexplicably beautiful way. His interpretations of political issues are often shockingly raw, and yet he also creates works that are full of whimsy and hope. Countless people have copies of his illustrations stuck on bedroom walls or fridges. Exactly why, they don’t always know; Leunig is able to express sentiment that is frequently shrouded beneath layers of political correctness and touch on people’s emotions in a way that transcends easy explanation.

Michael Leunig is a deeply contemplative individual. He is softly spoken and exudes humility and a sense of calm. Before we meet he requests that we publish his self-portrait rather than a photograph because he is averse to mug-shots in the media. His expression of self is clearly intrinsically linked to his role as an artist.

His understanding of art is complex. “A lot of people think that it’s just there to serve causes sometimes, and while it can do that, it can bring forth ideas, art is also a thing unto itself. If works in mysterious ways. It breathes some spirit into culture hopefully.”

The idea of human nature is one in which Leunig is profoundly interested. He describes his love of walking down the street and engaging in conversations with strangers, and his understanding of the artist as someone who delves into the emotional and spiritual aspect of the self. The artist should explore the psyche and subconscious motivations present in society, and often does so more effectively than political analysts, whom he sees as being too often preoccupied with superficial phenomena.



Leunig has always been drawn to creative expression. As a young student at Monash University he contributed cartoons to *Lot’s Wife* before he was conscripted in the Vietnam War, which he avoided due to hearing loss in one ear. The atmosphere of political radicalism at this time was influential in crafting him as an artist. He was astutely aware of what he describes as a very dire situation and was actively opposed, yet he suggests that he doesn’t, and never did, live the stereotypical life of a political radical. He expressed political sentiment through art, realising radicalism in a philosophical and artistic sense.

In order to create political art – cartoons in Leunig’s case – he says it is necessary to be strong and provocative. “If you’re going to be philosophical you’ve got to be strong, you can’t be weak about it.” Strength is a quality which Leunig has needed. Whilst he has been named as a national living treasure for his contribution to Australian society, he has also suffered greatly for his persistent

commitment to certain beliefs.

During the Iraq War Leunig created a series of staunchly anti-war cartoons for which he was spurned by many of his peers. The pain he suffered due to this is still raw; “I’m still trying to come to terms with it; I’ve still got some despair and some terrible anger about the journalist support [of the war].” He describes his war era works as saying things which he thought were entirely reasonable; “just gently asking gently for people not to hate so severely, because hate keeps us off balance.” He comments that; “I’ve never been forgiven for that – for saying things which I thought were entirely reasonable... it was a horrible time.”

Despite this, many Australians identified with the message to which Leunig was giving form. He suggests that, “sometimes a picture tells a thousand words... because it’s primal. And war itself is a primal business.” Whereas words can be argued about, and used to rationalize and naturalise issues, Leunig believes that the visual medium can be uniquely

powerful because it is non-intellectual. “A cartoon, a photo, just bypasses the intellect and is emotional. And it should be emotional.”

Many of Leunig’s cartoons also contain words, often in verse form. “There’s an interesting chemistry between a word and an image that I discovered in my own way, in my own evolution.” His work, he says is not highly evolved draftsmanship, but symbolic drawings whose value lays not so much in their aesthetic construction as their effect.

“You’re touching a lot of people – they don’t like this war, they’re frustrated, they don’t know why, they haven’t got the words. But if you say something for them which is poetic and strong... it touches what is semi-conscious in them, and they say ‘Yes, you’re feeling what I feel.’ And so there’s a therapy that’s happening in there.”

Although he never intentionally set out to achieve it, Leunig recognizes in retrospect that he has become a spokesperson for the everyman through his work. He suggests that there is a human tradition through which “the prophet poet speaks the grief of the people. There’s often a person who, not by force of their intellect, supplies some gifted empathy; they speak for the people.” The repercussion of assuming this role is that people who represent dominant ideologies “hate you for giving form to that feeling... and when they come down heavily on you you’re most effective.”

According to Leunig, the real power of art is that it speaks to people in a different language on a different level. His work is not designed to portray a neat calculus of cause and effect or direct viewers to a certain emotional response – it is evocative and has a mystique which he has seen reflected by people telling him that they have had certain cartoons on their notice-boards for years and yet are unsure of the meaning.

Leunig is a spiritual man, but not in a strictly religious sense. He attributes the meaning of the word to “some quality of vitality; vitality of mind, the joy of life, the sadness of life.” He comments that it is often when people are grieving that they are spiritual; “You see the real beauty and strength of people sometimes in their grief.”

Given the pain that Leunig suffered during the

Iraq War, one has to wonder whether the artwork produced at the time was a reflection of personal grief. In addition to political pieces Leunig is renowned for drawing images of ducks and men with curly hair – light hearted, yes, but perhaps equally as profound as his obviously serious images.

“That little sublime quality that I am drawn to in my work is an insistence on some kind of beauty. We live in a world which is fraught with lies and ugliness. It’s a contemporary condition: modernity, industrialization, technology – it leads to a... loss of beauty and a false beauty.”

Leunig attributes beauty more to a philosophical sense of being rather than what he sees as its modern interpretation: glamour.

“The artist doesn’t give the official version of reality; they give probably a more profound version – the official version is almost skewed.”

“We live in this cult of cleverness. We’re asked to be... very witty and intellectual to the point where we live in our heads. There’s something beautiful about innocence, some truthful intelligence about innocence. I’m not talking about being naïve or a fool; I’m talking about this capacity to see truth, to see beauty. A child can do that in some ways. So I’ve got this idea of mature innocence. One can go on and mature and yet retain this... love for an innocent way of life.”

Leunig realises this through creativity, stipulating in the same breath that you don’t have to be an artist to be creative. Creativity is defined by spontaneity and having an open approach to the world. It is also based in our interactions with other people; “You don’t just speak clichés to each other; you actually be present... dare to be frank and truthful with another or make a joke... that’s a great creativity.” Leunig’s

artwork fits seamlessly into this brief.

To be creative, Leunig believes that people must be able to make do with little rather than constantly seeking stimulation and fulfilling the role of consumer dictated to us by a society fixated on economic growth. He counts moments of solitude as greatly important. He lives in the bush and likes to do naturalistic things – drawing, painting, pottering in the garden. He reveals that as a young man he discovered that he enjoyed leaving parties and hearing the sounds of laughter and clinking glasses fading as he walked into the night.

The whimsical images that Leunig creates therefore serve an important purpose. Whilst overtly political images clearly point to what is wrong with the world, ducks and curly-haired men give us an alternative. These quirky depictions may not be literal, but they do evoke a return to a more hopeful, unspoiled appreciation of the world, and make a mockery of the real one through virtue of the huge disparity between the two. As such, they are also political.

“All newspapers buy into the prevailing ethic, into popular culture... if you’re writing against the grain and mocking it a bit, saying ‘this is madness too’, this isn’t necessarily good for the whole image of the paper.”

As demonstrated by his commitment to opposing the Iraq War and sometimes scathing depictions of other social problems, however, Leunig’s primary concern is not for the image of the paper. “The artist doesn’t give the official version of reality; they give probably a more profound version – the official version is almost skewed.”

“You can’t turn to cartoonists to promote glamour; they’re there to speak for the ugly people. They’re there for the outcasts too, because the outcasts are very often outcast because they have very interesting ideas.”

Michael Leunig is a rare, unflinchingly independent voice in Australian media. He has been both loved and reviled, embraced by the public for the beauty of his art and abandoned because of the challenges it often poses. Interesting ideas are something he has in abundance, and, luckily, is not afraid to share.

A FIELD GUIDE TO NUCLEAR STATES

Rebecca Irvine

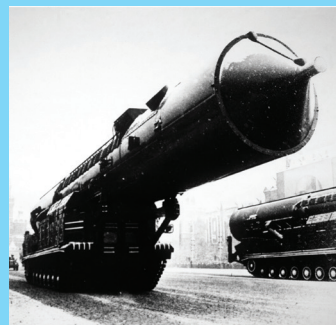
There's been a lot of talk about nuclear disarmament in recent years, with world leaders wanting to squeeze every last drop of political capital out of it if and when they can. Despite the fact that the Cold War ended over 20 years ago, there are new nuclear-related issues facing contemporary international relations, and not just from rogue states like North Korea and Iran. Tensions between Pakistan and India, for example, raise concerns about the nuclear armament of those countries. With this in mind, let's take a quick look at who has what and pointed at whom, in this slightly less satirical than usual field guide.



Iran

How many: None known

Recent remarks from Ayatollah Khamenei hoping for a nuclear weapon-free Middle East have gone some way to reinforcing their claims that they are only using nuclear materials for power rather than weapons. However, Iran remains under investigation by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the close proximity of Israel and its 100 or so warheads could be considered a strong motivation for Iran to develop its own. Their suspected nuclear weapons program has prompted UN sanctions, as well as threats that Israel might strike Iran's nuclear facilities. There is no doubt troubled negotiations will continue until some substantial evidence is revealed, one way or another.



Russia

How many: 5,500

Russia's large stockpiles of nuclear weapons, remnants of the Cold War, are being slowly dismantled as a result of arms reduction agreements with the US. The only problem with having that many weapons is keeping track of them. There have been instances of weapons and nuclear material reportedly going missing, especially ones which were originally located in former Soviet states. The chaotic break-up of the Soviet Union has presumably created some lax security, with some of this nuclear material even finding its way into the hands of the Italian Mafia in the 1990s.



Pakistan

How many: Between 90 and 110

Pakistan has been steadily increasing its nuclear arsenal over the last few years, aiming to deter India, which has a similar number of warheads. Other than this semi-arms race with India, Pakistan's weapons are cause for further concern because of the large Taliban presence in the region. Despite the fact that the warheads are kept in well-guarded bases, there is still a risk that a Taliban (or al-Qaeda) attack or act of bribery might let these weapons fall into the wrong hands. The threat is considered so severe that the US has formed contingency plans to seize the weapons.



North Korea

How many: Roughly enough material to build about 10 warheads

Everyone's favourite nuclear-armed state, every new weapons test by North Korea sends the world into a diplomatic frenzy. North Korea has danced a merry jig around the international community, flipping us off as they go. Discussions to suspend nuclear weapons testing and allow IAEA inspectors into the country always reach an impasse, and North Korea requests yet more concessions before they even agree to come back to the negotiating table. This vicious cycle has held the international community to ransom for quite some time, at the behest of the North Koreans' random behaviour.

CRIMINALISING PATHOLOGY: CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND THE LAW

David Heslin

Andy Muirhead was, for a while, one of the ABC's most popular figures. The affable presenter of television programme *Collectors*, he also had a gig on Tasmanian radio and did a bit of stand-up comedy on the side. That all came to an abrupt end two years ago with the news that he had been charged with accessing child pornography.

At the time of writing, his trial is in its final stages. Muirhead has entered a guilty plea and awaits sentencing. His counsel has argued for a suspended sentence; it seems more likely that he will see time in prison.

Regardless of the result, his media career is over. Child pornography, after all, is one of the most reviled phenomena in our society; a spectre so loathed that it has granted more than one overseas government a mandate to regulate the internet. Given cultural attitudes towards paedophilia, it is unsurprising that there is little outcry against the punishment of those who consume it.

Nevertheless, Muirhead is not himself an exploiter of children. There is no suggestion that he has provided financial support to producers of child pornography; nor has he participated in the creation of such material. This is not to say that those who download child pornography ought to be considered morally unaccountable — supply, of course, requires a demand — rather, perhaps, that their status as criminals should be reconsidered.

In Australia, the maximum penalty for viewing child pornography is 10 to 21 years in jail. One or two years' imprisonment and a place on the sex offenders register is a more common sentence; needless to say, the blow to social standing is immeasurable. In Muirhead's case, the mere fact of his being charged was sufficient for the ABC to immediately remove all trace of him and his programme from their website and television schedule. It seems unlikely that a financial crime or

case of non-sexual violence would have provoked such a swift reaction; evidently, child pornography remains one of our society's biggest taboos.

That is not to say that Australian child pornography legislation has been completely immune from criticism. The severity of the criteria has attracted some notoriety. Convictions have been recorded for possession of cartoon images and 19th century literature. The term 'child', in this context, can still be used to refer to anyone up to the age of 18; 'pornography', too, gains a somewhat more elastic definition. Clearly, there are grounds for reform.

Muirhead's case is not so simple. The prosecution has alleged that he was a habitual child pornography viewer, with a few of the images being described as "sadistic". There can be no doubt that the law is right to view the production of this kind of material as especially heinous; but what of its consumption? It is not illegal in any meaningful way to view footage of, say, beheadings or violent assaults; and yet, this kind of material also depicts awful crimes. Why should images of child abuse be treated so differently?

“Left unchecked, many psychiatric disorders carry risk of harm; it is not, however, against the law to be diagnosed with a disorder.”

A primary reason is that child pornography is viewed as a means for normalising paedophilia — that is, it is seen to belong on a continuum beginning with sexual desire and ending with child abuse. Devoting funds to monitor child pornography access is intended as a preventative measure: paedophiles can be captured before they get the chance to enact what they see. There is, it must be said, a major flaw in this argument. Whilst it is true that many

child molesters have a history of accessing child pornography networks, it would be an elementary logical fallacy to infer that an equivalent proportion of those who consume the content will necessarily go on to abuse children. As with any human behaviour, the potential to abuse can be controlled by various inhibiting factors — for instance, shame, empathy or fear of repercussions — and the mere existence of sexual desire, as powerful as it can be, is no guarantee of it being acted upon. To ignore this distinction is to criminalise the individual before any harmful action has actually been committed — *Minority Report* logic at its best.

Nevertheless, it would be foolish to ignore child pornography use as a potential red flag. Clearly, any avenue for prevention of child abuse must be explored, and monitoring usage is one potential method. It is disappointing, however, that no alternatives to the criminal justice system seem to be under consideration. Left unchecked, many psychiatric disorders carry risk of harm; it is not, however, against the law to be diagnosed with a disorder. Aside from its highly taboo status, there is little reason why paedophilia, like any other high-risk pathology, should not be handled by medical professionals and counsellors — ideally, long before any children have been victimised. If a more open paradigm were in place — one in which people concerned about problematic desires felt safe to seek out confidential professional help, and specialised services existed for this purpose — we might begin to see a far more effective and progressive means of child abuse prevention.

In contrast, the justice system can only ever be reactive; only capable of response after the fact. Criminalising child pornography access in the hope of catching a few future child molesters is, at best, a crude form of prevention. In reality, it only serves to further marginalise a condition that can and should be managed in a clinical environment.

FIGHTING THE GENERALISATIONS OF GENDER

Cam Peter speaks to the inspiring trans-activist Sally Goldner about identity and campaigning for transgender rights.

Gender identity is, for most people, not something they often think about – it’s a certainty that you are born with and one that is constantly affirmed by your biology and the world around you. You grow up playing with certain toys of certain colors, and childhood games that mimic the adult world fall into familiar patterns of sex and gender roles; the father, the breadwinner, the mother, the housekeeper. Society is typically divided along a gendered dichotomy, a limited binary that for most people is natural, certain, familiar.

Sally Goldner never found this certainty until she was much older; she was born and raised as a male in a liberal Jewish family in inner city Melbourne. “There was always something wrong...a missing piece of the jigsaw,” she says. Ironically, Goldner attended Brighton Grammar, a prestigious all-boys school where where she first became acutely aware of how she did not conform to gender expectations, and the repercussions thereof.

“When I was in years seven and eight, I was verbally and psychologically bullied by the entire class for being ‘too sensitive’. I thought there must be something wrong with me, not knowing that the femininity they were referring to by ‘too sensitive’ was a large part of who I was.”

I meet Goldner in the meeting room of the Federation of Legal Centers, where she works as an accountant. She has a charismatic air about her and is disarmingly honest when it comes sharing the intricacies of her personal and political life.

At one point in the interview, I ask Goldner how she identifies. She stops mid-sentence, smiles slightly and says very slowly, “I am a person, who is a bisexual, polyamorous, introverted, highly sensitive and a non-operative transwoman...among other things.”

The complexity of this identity makes sense in context; Goldner has had to reconstruct her entire life from marginalized identities after rejecting the role society and biology had dictated for her. She came out as transgender at the age of 29 and began transitioning from male to female.

“Up until 29, when I came out, I had no vision. I

was living everyone else’s life... I was trying to be a masculine, male, heterosexual corporate accountant and football fan. I’d never really thought things through for myself.”

She describes this as a “turning point” in her life, not just in regards to gender identity, but as a complete shift away from the life she had previously lived. “Everything changed,” she says, “I was on autopilot for a long time...there was no soul there.”

“Up until 29, when I came out, I had no vision... I was trying to be a masculine, male, heterosexual corporate accountant and football fan. I’d never really thought things through for myself.”

Her transition from male to female not only denoted a physical transition for her, but a spiritual and emotional one as well.

“The best way I can describe working from your soul is walking the tightrope between feeling absolutely calm and absolutely energised and I never had that. I can’t think of a time I felt that before 29.”

This “tightrope” between calm and energetic seems to easily characterise Goldner’s manner. She talks slowly and carefully and enunciates every word, but there is a perceptible undercurrent of fervent passion. This is fitting, it seems, of someone who has dedicated their life to fighting discrimination and ignorance – well beyond the mantle of transgenderism.

For the last 15 years, Goldner has been advocating for the basic human rights of transgender people in Victoria in her role as founder and co-convenor of TransGender Victoria. This organisation was established as an advocacy group and community advisor

in 1998 to address discrimination faced by transgendered and gender-diverse people in Victoria.

According to Goldner, before the introduction by the Victorian Parliament of the Equal Opportunity Reform in 2000, the majority of individuals wishing to affirm their identity in the workplace were “fired on the spot” because there was no legal protection from discrimination.

Indeed, Goldner describes instances where workers who came out as transgender were sexually or violently assaulted within their workplace. There was very little legal recourse for these events because there was no protection under the law; due to the stigma surrounding the issue police were often reluctant to get involved.

TransGender Victoria, and Goldner in her role as co-convenor, were instrumental to the 2000 amendment to the Equal Opportunity Act (1995), which added “Gender Identity” and “Sexual orientation” to the criteria for legal protection from discrimination. This was the first piece of legislation that offered protection from discrimination for transgender and other gender diverse individuals when accessing employment, education and other opportunities.

In 2005, TransGender Victoria influenced documentation reform, allowing post-operative individuals to obtain gender recognition certificates. Although this was a significant development in regards to gender recognition for transgender individuals, the necessity of surgery for recognition of identity remains highly problematic and narrow. As Goldner points out, gender reassignment surgery is at best imperfect, while also being expensive and potentially dangerous. And many transgendered people, like Goldner, choose to be non-operative.

“I genuinely believe I’m female, regardless of whether I’ve had surgery or not; I believe it’s logical and appropriate to have a female birth certificate - not have to go and have a surgery that I don’t want, don’t need or can’t afford to have an F on that birth certificate.”

Kayleen White was Goldner’s co-convenor of Transgender Victoria at the time the Equal

Opportunity (Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation) Act 2000 was introduced. “Sally was better than I [sic] at doing the radio interviews with shock jocks,” she remarks of the period. “After the EO Act reform, I was exhausted and had to retire from activism for several years, but Sally was able to continue and to establish a well-respected position in a number of communities.”

Blair Archibold is Goldner’s co-host on her weekly radio show, Out of the Pan, on 3CR which “focuses on pansexual issues and includes transgender and bisexual issues” (pansexual meaning ‘knowing no boundaries of sex or gender’). Archibold, a self-described “transguy” is studying counseling at university. He first heard of Goldner’s activism work when he was involved in the WA Gender Project and asked to talk on her show about a court case involving gender recognition certificates.

Archibold is now a permanent fixture on the show, and finds it “refreshing to be able to discuss issues that are not often given much, if any, attention in mainstream media.”

Goldner’s CV is an enviable one – as well as her continued work with TransgenderVictoria, she does

advocacy and accounting work for the Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby and the Bisexual Alliance (Victoria). She is also a Project Support Worker for Southern Health Gender Centre. She is well known for her commitment and endurance; as Archibold puts it, “We never really know just how much our



words and actions help others.”

Goldner’s continued battles include gender recognition certificates for “affirmed gender” – so that non-operative transgendered people can be recognized for their gender on their identifying documentation – and working to establish a physical building for the Zoe Belle Gender Centre, which currently only has the capacity to do its vital work supporting the “health and wellbeing of Victoria’s sex and gender diverse population” online.

Goldner is an activist whose political influence extends far outside the professional sphere; her musical and artistic performance interests have seen her act as a stand-up comedian, the first ever male-to-female transgender drag king, as well as a spoken word-artist focusing on her love of wrestling.

I ask her how she deals with potential audience ignorance about transgenderism. “I usually open with a joke,” she says.

“‘Hey, what a huge entrance’ said the gender surgeon to the transsexual.”

Sally Goldner runs a weekly radio show on 3CR called Out of the Pan.

PLAIN PACKAGING WON’T BUTT-OUT PROBLEM

Frances O’Brien

On the 10th of November 2011, the Tobacco Plain Packaging legislation passed the Senate and became law in Australia and on the 15th August 2012, the High Court backed the Federal Government’s legislation requiring that all cigarettes be sold in plain packets. The introduction of the plain packaging law, which will be implemented in December this year, has been viewed as a major win for public health in Australia.

The legislation requires the removal of all branding from cigarettes. Cigarette manufacturers will be required to print only the brand name in a mandated size, font and place on the pack, which will be a drab, dark brown colour.

Whilst the Tobacco Plain Packaging Act will have some effect, it is unlikely to be the watershed

movement that the Government and anti-smoking organisations are purporting. It has been claimed that plain packaging is a vital preventative public health measure, and will play a major role in a decline in the number of young people who smoke. The supposed benefits of the Tobacco Plain Packaging Act are that plain packaged cigarettes will reduce the appeal of smoking to young people, will reduce the deception about the harmfulness of cigarettes, and will strengthen the impact of graphic health warnings.

Although the colour and the packaging of cigarettes do play some role in a young person’s decision to take up smoking, the driving influence is usually social. The majority of people I know who smoke do so socially. For them, smoking is associated with going out, a drink in one hand and a cigarette in the other. For these types of smokers, the Plain Packaging

Laws will have little effect. Although social smokers smoke a variety of brands, and the colour of the packing may play some role in their decision of which cigarettes to buy, the intention to buy cigarettes exists regardless of the aesthetic of the package – pretty colour packaging is not a major motivator.

A more effective move in reducing the number of young people who smoke would be to ban smoking in restaurants, bars and nightclubs altogether. If this ban was enforced everywhere, it would not adversely impact attendance for certain venues. Furthermore, the banning of smoking in entertainment venues would be critical in actively reducing the number of people who smoke because it would remove the social aspect of smoking which attracts so many young people.

RACISM, REFUGEES AND THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT: HERE WE GO AGAIN

Lizzie Nicholson and Dean Vincent

On August 13th, the “expert panel” commissioned by the Federal Government to investigate ways to stop the deaths of asylum seekers on Australian seas released their final report. The panel put forward twenty-two recommendations that are focused on deterrence, including the reintroduction of regional processing centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea. It was also recommended that the Government continue to pursue the “Malaysia solution”. Under this policy asylum seekers who arrive via boat would be imprisoned in detention camps in Malaysia, which is not a signatory of the UN Refugee Convention.

The resultant policy marks a return to Howard’s racist refugee policies of the early 2000s and the complete capitulation of the Labor Party. All recommendations were passed with only two members of the lower house opposing the legislation - the Greens’ Adam Bandt and Independent Andrew Wilkie. Labor, a nominally “left wing” party, has endorsed a return to the most draconian refugee policy in Australia’s history and one which they had promised to abolish. This is literally the Pacific Solution 2.0.

The panel was supportive not only of off-shore processing centres and the Malaysia policy, but also suggested that in future the Government should consider turning back the boats that do make it to Australian shores. In essence, this entails telling people who arrive at our doorstep asking for help to go back to where they came from. The majority of asylum seekers flee from situations in which their lives and safety are threatened to the extent that boarding a leaky boat and making the perilous sea journey to Australia is considered an option. The Australian Government should be ashamed of backing a policy that institutes such a total lack of compassion.

Turning back the boats is not only a complete capitulation to Tony Abbott but is entirely illegal. In June this year Senator Bob Carr, when speaking about the turning back the boats policy presented by the Liberal Party, stated “the policy would be illegal under international law” and “would be illegal under interpretation by the Australian High Court.” Talk about hypocrisy.

To make matters worse, the report recommends that those asylum seekers who arrive via boat should not be allowed to sponsor family members to join them in Australia. Such a recommendation is likely to cause an increase in the number of women and children risking their lives to make the journey to Australia by boat. The Government’s policy has been marketed on the basis of deterrence, which, according to Government rhetoric, will lead to fewer deaths at sea.

“If Australia is serious about protecting the wellbeing of asylum seekers we should be embracing onshore community processing.”

Asylum seekers already face torturous standards in mandatory detention. Under the new policy these are due to worsen. In 2012 so far, a man in Broadmeadows Detention Centre has sown his lips together, numerous people have attempted suicide, many have engaged in hunger strikes and a new form of insanity, Protracted Asylum Seeker Syndrome, has been defined by a group of University of Melbourne researchers to describe the mental state of some of the imprisoned asylum seekers. All of this has happened in Australian Detention Camps. Under the Government’s new policy, asylum seekers and refugees will be detained in offshore centres that are qualitatively worse than those in Australia. A detention centre is simply a euphemism for a prison.

If Australia is serious about protecting the wellbeing of asylum seekers we should be embracing onshore community processing in a safe and supportive environment. At present there are some asylum seekers who are able to live in the community whilst their applications are being processed – so we know that this system can work. Furthermore, prior to the introduction of mandatory detention in 1992, this is how all asylum seekers were processed.

Only three of the report’s twenty-two recommendations can be seen as even vaguely positive. The panel did suggest an increased humanitarian intake (up to 20,000 from 13,000) and increased funding for research on asylum seekers. However, this Government has a record of showing no concern for refugees and there is no guarantee that these recommendations will be carried out. This is the same Government that promised not to imprison children in detention centres if they were elected, yet at the time of writing is responsible for detaining 600 children. This is also the same Prime Minister who in a recent press conference stated that asylum seekers could be housed in tents on Nauru or Manus Island whilst the detention centres are made inhabitable.

There are many people in Australia who are in favour of a more progressive approach to asylum seekers and ashamed by the actions of our politicians. The response to this policy must not be one of demoralisation or melancholy, but one of anger, disgust and inspiration. If a substantial grassroots campaign existed across the nation, prepared to stand up against the anti-refugee rhetoric of our government, the policy outcome of the latest political deadlock might have been different.

The introduction of this policy necessitates action by refugee activists if we as a nation are to be serious about protecting those who are the most vulnerable. We need to stop engaging in hollow political rhetoric and start engaging in a compassionate manner with the people whose lives are put in jeopardy by our actions.

Building a campaign means talking to friends and getting involved on campus. If you feel strongly about these issues then show your support for refugees at the upcoming protest on September 22nd at Maribyrnong Detention Centre.

The Monash Refugee Action Collective meets every Wednesday in Wholefoods at 2pm. To find out more, contact MSA Environment & Social Justice Office Bearer Laura Riccardi on 0401315387 or at lmr4@student.monash.edu.

LOT’S WIFE ASKS:

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE REINTRODUCTION OF OFF-SHORE PROCESSING?

“They’re not doing anything
illegal - it’s fucked.”
– Business 2nd Year

“It’s more perverse than you
think. Off-shore processing
impinges on the Sovereignty
of Nauru – it’s a new form of
Oceanic Imperialism.”
– Arts 3rd Year

“Why are we so bad at helping
the innocent?”
– Science 3rd Year

“It’s disgusting and inhumane -
these people deserve to have an
easy life, just like you and I.”
– Arts 1st Year

“Australia’s always been an
nation built on immigrants.”
– Commerce 3rd Year

“If you want to be a player on
the global stage, you have to deal
with the consequences of your
actions - like the refugees from
your wars in Afghanistan and
Iraq.”
– Science 2nd Year



HISTORY EDUCATION KEY TO INDIGENOUS PROGRESS

Shawn Andrews

I recently got back from an amazing trip to Switzerland where I was fortunate enough to represent Indigenous Australians at a conference on creating change makers in communities. I spent eight days with some of the world's most driven and dynamic change makers; Indian business men that were saying no to corruption and raising the wages of their lowest paid staff, child soldiers transformed into country leaders, women from around the world who create peace circles to promote harmony, and many people who are fighting for the rights of the poor. The experience was humbling and heart wrenching; the stories people told me about where they come from and what they are doing were inspiring and disturbingly honest. Of all of these amazing stories, there was one in particular that struck a chord with me – that of a German woman who had recently travelled to Australia.

Whilst having a quiet beer and sitting by Lake Geneva, my new German friend decided to share with me her tale of visiting Australia. She said she was shocked and totally appalled by what she had seen and learnt on her year-long visit here.

When she and a friend had just arrived in Australia, they were approached by three twenty-something year old Aussies who struck up a conversation. After approximately five minutes, one of the boys made a Nazi reference that angered my friend. She challenged the young man, and said that his ignorance was appalling and that he should take a good look at what his own country has done to their Indigenous people - just think about the Stolen Generation; what Australia did there was disgraceful! The young man replied, “What is the Stolen Generation?” My friend was shocked. She couldn't believe that a young Australian didn't know what the Stolen Generation was. She asked the other boys and they also didn't know.

After a year travelling around Australia and meeting many Aussies, my friend concluded that our country is quite different to what she had expected. She had been taught Australian history at school; the good, the bad and the ugly. She had learnt about the

English invasion and how it destroyed the Indigenous way of life; she had learnt about Indigenous history and stories of the dreamtime, sustainability and connection with the Earth. She had a great understanding of Indigenous health issues and wondered why a country with such wealth was treating its poor in such a disgraceful manner.

Most of all, she wanted to know why she had learnt so much about Australian and Indigenous Australian history in Germany, and yet the majority of Australians she had met on her travels knew bugger all about their own country. Before attending the change makers conference, I was already aware that there is major problem with the education of Australian history in Australia; however, I didn't realise the extent of it until I heard this story. I felt like I had been slapped in the face with a cold fish! I was in shock, not because I was ignorant, but because I was ashamed that I had not done anything about it and had needed a foreigner to tell me what exists right under my nose.

Here is the issue. I know that a lot of bad shit happened in the past. I have heard horrifying stories of Indigenous children being locked in cupboards, hiding from police that were trying to take them from their parents. I have listened to ex-policemen apologise for beating Indigenous children in front of their mothers just so they could demonstrate that they were in charge. I know we have a dark history and that some stupid people made stupid decisions that they thought were right at the time. Some of what was done was horrifying and disgusting and still affects a large number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people today. The fact is that we must acknowledge what happened, talk about it, accept it



and start to move on. Please don't think that acceptance makes it right; it just means that we are ready to start the healing process.

We should be using the education system to teach Australians about the mistakes that were made, and using these stories to help fix the problems that exist now. Most people aren't aware of how much Indigenous people have to give. We have amazing culture, family connections, mystical creatures, stories that are endless, and a love for the environment that should be admired. We rejoice in being social and have a community that is vibrant and strong. Imagine if young Australians were able to embrace the Indigenous culture and see it as their own. They could see the mistakes and see the solutions; wouldn't that be a country worth striving for?

People say we should build bridges between communities to help them understand each other; bugger that, let's remove the river! With the river removed there's no need for bridges. There are no boundaries, and we become collectively responsible for actions, as they affect everyone. To remove the river, however, we need education so that everyone can hear and understand the stories of our past: the good, the bad and the ugly.

FROM LEGITIMACY TO VICTIM BLAMING: THE DANGEROUS CULTURE OF RAPE

Michelle Li

“First of all, from what I understand from doctors, [pregnancy from rape] is really rare. If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut the whole thing down.”

Republican Senate nominee Todd Akin claims that he “misspoke” in this interview with a St. Louis television station on August 19, 2012. But although any individual can recognize the blatant medical inaccuracies presented by Akin, there is a far more sinister assumption being propagated in his statement. While it is one thing to debate abortion from an ethical or moral standpoint, it is another to determine what does, or does not, constitute a “legitimate” rape.

This is hardly the first in a series of incidents that have begun to foster a dangerous culture around the once taboo issue of rape. Unfounded and bigoted at best, these ideologies are finding their way into public discourse, thus normalizing and indeed, detracting from, the prevalence of these crimes.

This can, in part, be attributed to popular media's effect on perceptions of sexual assault and rape. Despite social progression over the past decade, several landmark incidents clearly illustrate the continuing phenomenon of ignorance entering standard dialogue. In 2005, District Attorney turned Senate candidate Ken Buck dismissed the alleged rape of a student on the grounds that she was to blame, claiming that “a jury could very well conclude that this is a case of buyer's remorse... it appears to me... you invited him over... the appearance is of consent.” On January 24 2011, worldwide marches were sparked in protest of the idea that a woman and her attire—not her perpetrator—were at fault for rape, when a representative of the Toronto Police stated “women should avoid dressing like sluts in order to not be victimized”. Then, on 6 July 2012, comedian Daniel Tosh publicly declared that “rape jokes [are always] funny, how can a rape joke not be funny, rape is hilarious”.

Should these views be eligible for introduction into topical debate? For all their faults, freedom of speech indicates yes. But sheer numbers tell us no.

Between 2010 and 2011, Victoria Police recorded

1473 incidences of rape, where 92% of the victims were female and 8% were male. However, it has always been difficult to gauge the true extent of sexual violence. Statistics from the Australian Institute of Criminology indicate that, whilst cases have increased by an average of 4% per year since 1995, many incidents still remain unreported.

With attitudes such as these being propagated through the public consciousness, it is little wonder that personal barriers exist in reporting these crimes. Incidents of rape are prone to assumptions of women in short skirts, walking alone in the dark and being naïve around strange men. As such, many victims who experience rape do not identify with having done so and, similarly, many perpetrators do not perceive themselves as rapists. Moreso, there is a tendency amongst victims to understate the nature of their assault, stemming from a fear of attracting social stigmas of victim blaming, questionable legitimacy and reprisal.

“The next morning people were grinning at me in the common room, giving him high fives. They didn't understand. I just wanted to cry.”

Even amongst university students, this features as a highly prevalent issue. In 2011, Universities Australia commissioned the Talk About It report. Through a survey of 1500 students, it examined experiences of sexual assault and harassment, perceptions of safety and views on how well incidents were dealt with once reported. The results that emerged were disturbing.

Incidents occurring at residential halls and colleges are far more common than many students believe them to be. Of the respondents, 17% reported that they had experienced rape and 12% had been victims of an attempt. Their attackers were acquaintances and friends (56%) or people that they knew intimately (22%). It is important to stress that these were usually

not strangers—they were friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, people from one's hall or the next hall over. Avoiding isolated locations at night would not have prevented these types of attacks. They are borne from a breach in trust between two individuals—a violation that is deeply personal in nature.

“He lived two doors down from me,” says Lisa*, a 19-year-old living on campus. “We started chatting at the Nott one night and went home together, but I barely remember it. I was so drunk. When we got to his room I realized I didn't want to sleep with him. But he wouldn't listen to me, he kept going... and I could barely speak, let alone put up a fight. The next morning people were grinning at me in the common room, giving him high fives. They didn't understand. I just wanted to cry.”

Many victims, like Lisa, experience rape in circumstances where they do not, or do not feel able to, consent due to alcohol, pressure or physical intimidation. Perhaps, then, it is a source of great worry that more than half of victims believe that a particular incident is not serious enough to report. Indeed, as revealed in the Talk About It survey, only 3% of victims reported incidents to their university, and even fewer reported it to police. And even then, a majority were unhappy with how the case was dealt with.

Rape is a very real issue. It concerns very real people. And while its effects do vary, for a vast majority it greatly impacts upon their daily lives. Confidence can be lost. Mental health can be compromised with the development of depression or anxiety. Personal relationships can become plagued by self-blame and guilt.

That's why it's time to change the culture surrounding rape. Public discourse needs to be separated from bigoted opinion and media must refrain from broadcasting material that propagates the ethos of self-blame. Because, until then, the guiltless victims of rape are not receiving the justice that they deserve.

**Names changed for confidentiality purposes*

PHOTOS IN FOCUS WITH EDWARD XU



Exploring new things is part of my nature, and taking photos is how I record it. After living in Melbourne for almost three years, I am getting much more familiar with this lovely city despite its unpredictable weather, especially in winter. Melbourne's tram system attracts me the most. It's like a hybrid of a bus and a train system; reliable but flexible, a smart balance between sightseeing and efficient travelling. My camera is a Sony Alpha 55, a portable but powerful machine which allows me to capture decent pictures without being too heavy to carry around the city.

CREATIVE WRITING

DISSENT: A GLOBAL AWAKENING

Md. Roysul Islam

I see a rise in humanity:
The inner souls of men
Released from their cages,
Cages guarded by times tyranny for ages.

Wrath of the poor and meek
Kept pressed deep in their hearts for long.
A rage so powerful, like a fire,
Can burst into flames with limitless care.

I feel a storm brewing
In the eyes of the young,
A storm with strength infinite,
Will catch corruption by its throat.

Hunger for justice and equality
Running like lava inside all protesters,
A hunger so dangerously profound
It will shine like a sun through the darkness of cloud.

I sensed a great change within you;
A butterfly you became,
Shedding the mortal coil of immortal soul,
You echoed freedom: my life's goal.

When dawn tore down the blanket of darkness,
You became that dawn.
The freshness of the morning, the sun, emerged
And the essence of life formed.

The symbol of freedom in my vision rises high,
Sewn by the wind with colors of eastern sky.
You are the inspiring symbol in all deserted minds,
Flowed as freedom in your ancestor's bloods.

Green grasses join the birds in harmony and peace
To follow your thorny paths where wars cease.
The purpose of the barbaric lives becomes humanity,
And humanity becomes your destiny.

WESTERN AID(S)

Paul Giffard-Forêt

Like Plato's Pharmakon, both
a poison, and a remedy
You give with one hand
what you take with the other

With your IMF loans, with
your World Bank hypocrisy
your big pharmaceutical companies
your patented oligarchy

Everyday in Africa,
thousands die
of your pseudo-generosity
your humanitarian interventions
your transnational institutions

WTO, MONSATO, NATO, UNO, NGO

Like Plato's Pharmakon, both
a poison, and a remedy
You give with one hand
what you take with the other

I used to dream
as a child
of a world
without adults

Little did I know
that this kingdom exists
A land of terrorists, fundamentalists
and child soldiers

Long ago,
their parents died
of a monster called Kony,
or is it Western aid(s)?

AIDS, HIV, ARV, for Anti-Retroviral Therapy
In Jo'Burg, Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria
Everyone knows who's the enemy
His name is BAYER, NORVATIS, or Abbot Labora-
tories

Like Plato's Pharmakon, both
A poison, and a remedy
Who give with one hand
What they take with the other

BLOOM

Michelle Li

He keeps me flourishing, this boy
Whose gaze trails across my flesh
As the sun does, mocking time,
His hand thrust deep into the earth
That teems with wet and worms and cold,
Till pulsing flesh meets this widow's heart,
These atria that twist upon themselves
So willingly, like nature's whore.

MELBOURNE WRITERS FESTIVAL 2012

Matthew Campbell

AUSTRALIA’S BOHEMIANS SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 1ST

It’s never been entirely clear to me what is meant by labels such as ‘hipster’, ‘indie’, ‘goth’, ‘punk’ and so on. Are these groups genuine renegades of Australian sub-culture? Or do they merely confirm society’s lazy caricatures and generalisations, built on shallow perceptions? Regardless of what these labels do for us, one Australian identity has remained consistent with the alternative ideologies and cultures that have proudly shaped Australian culture: the bohemian.

This fascinating event, chaired by ABC Radio National producer Sarah L’Estrange, delved into the history of Australian fringe culture: those larrikins

and intellectuals who have shaken up politics and popular culture, and lived according to no one’s expectations of good, bad, clean or dirty.

Among those interviewed were former and current bohemians; Dr Tony Moore, a writer, historian and Monash academic; Si Jay Gould, a Melbourne-based promoter and poet; and designer Caroline Vains. Each speaker reeled off a list of their “bohemian credentials”; their reasons for deserving a place in the legacy of Australian bohemianism that stretches back to 1860.

Dr Moore recalled his involvement with post-punk subcultures in the 1980s, while Caroline Vains was

“horrified, disturbed, distressed [and] disgusted” by the bourgeois values she grew up around. She literally removed herself from that part of society and spent ten years living with disenfranchised members of Sydney’s outer suburbs. There was also frequent mention of parties.

But, as the speakers took pains to express, there’s always been more to bohemianism than sex, drugs and rock and roll. The bohemian is unashamedly elitist in his or her tastes, carrying around a leftist sensibility and flare for activism that is communicated through their talents.

Moore, now author of an engaging study into Australia’s bohemian history, *Dancing With Empty Pockets: Australia’s Bohemians*, was embedded in

the underground media scene, working his way up to the ABC and Ms Vains has professional experience in interior architecture, theatre, film and television design. Both emphasised the notion that bohemianism is an ideal training ground for youths to gain the experience and values in order to enter into the working world in creative and exciting ways.

And as Gould argued, it isn’t all us-and-them. Some of our most edifying cultural footprints have come from a constant tug-of-war between the fringe and the mainstream, including festivals like Big Day Out and radio station Triple J, which has helped many bands achieve commercial success. This sentiment was echoed by an energetic and inspiring performance of Gould’s metropolitan epic, *This City Speaks To Me*.

WHY I READ SATURDAY AUGUST 25TH

Four prominent contemporary writers came together to wax historical on their own personal relationships with books and reading. There was little doubt in my mind what the real message behind this seminar should have been: the increasingly apathetic and negative sentiment towards reading literature as a generational trend; but strangely, it received little consideration.

The overall lack of attendance from people closer to my age seemed to confirm my fears, but it wasn’t clear to me that they missed anything important. The talk was set up like an interview, the bulk of which ranged somewhat narrowly from whether or not the writers were read to as children, to what made them start writing. The effect was a few anecdotal yarns with as much

valuable insight as a segment on *Oprah*.

Former UK Poet-Laureate Sir Andrew Motion made the case for reading as a means for helping us “recognise things that we already know,” and novelist Antoni Jach offered that “reading gives us insight into how other people think,” but the disappointing layout of the event seemed to betray what should have been implied in the title ‘Why I Read’.

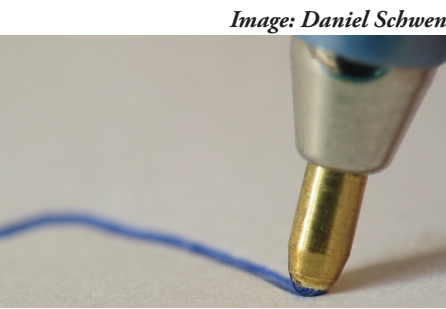
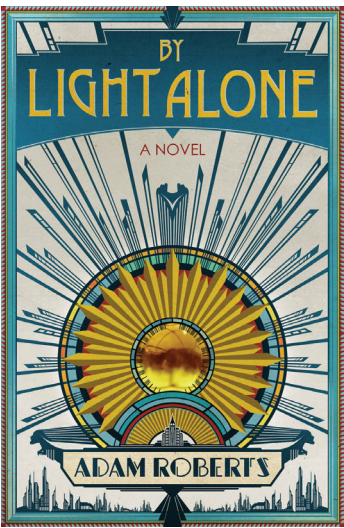


Image: Daniel Schwen

BY LIGHT ALONE: A BOOK REVIEW

Joshua Reinders



In his novel *By Light Alone*, sci-fi author Adam Roberts explores an intriguing possibility: what if future advances in genetic engineering make it possible for humans to photosynthesise sunlight through their hair? His vivid reply takes place in a fascinating world where having a shaved head is a fashionable status symbol and the consumption of food has become an ostentatious extravagance that only the rich can afford. The great majority of the world’s population, however, lives in abject poverty. This is the result of over a century of ever worsening exploitation at the hands of a brutal capitalism that has long since cast aside the obligation to pay the working poor any semblance of a subsistence wage. It is into this yawning divide between the world’s haves and have-nots that the reader is plunged from the get go, as we are immediately introduced to the main characters – three wealthy middle-aged couples enjoying a luxurious ski holiday on the snowy slopes of Turkey’s Mount Ararat. Flaunting their decadent lifestyle amidst the impoverished locals, their days are a non-stop binge of food, drink, and sex paraded

before the eyes of the long-haired resort staff, who could never dream of indulging in such conspicuous consumption themselves.

Before long, one of the couples is brought back to sobering reality when they experience the kidnapping of their daughter. There were no witnesses present, and local police seem unable or unwilling to track her

down. It is then that the girl’s family begins a painful transformation that will force them to question their unthinking acceptance of the injustices that make their standard of living possible.

I really enjoyed this book. The main concept is one that I’ve never seen done before, and it’s been written convincingly enough that I mostly managed to quieten any doubts in my head over its sheer implausibility. Roberts explores and expounds upon the impact of a lot of problems that are all too familiar – racism, injustice, and the unequal distribution of wealth, and in this regard it’s hard not to experience the narrative as a thinly veiled critique or even satire of the apathy and excesses of a conceited West. And even though the story’s last quarter sags a little (giving the impression that Roberts had already said what he wanted to and just didn’t quite know how to tie it off), I still found this to be a stimulating read from an author who clearly has many interesting things to say about where we’re headed.

Four stars out of five.

FILM REVIEW: TOTAL RECALL (2012)

Bren Carruthers

Director Len Wiseman (chiefly responsible for the *Underworld* series of films) must have been sifting through his old DVD collection when he decided to pull together a remake of the classic 1990 Sci-Fi film *Total Recall*. That film, based on the Philip K. Dick short story *We Can Remember It For You Wholesale*, saw Arnold Schwarzenegger in the lead role, rampaging across Mars in an attempt to regain his memory, establish his identity, and liberate the Martian population. Wiseman’s variation only begs one question: in the 22 years since, have we as an audience actually gotten dumber?

Allow that to sink in for a moment, if you will: I’m actually suggesting that *Total Recall* is dumber than an Arnold Schwarzenegger film.

Colin Farrell reprises Schwarzenegger’s dual role of Quaid/Hauser in a new world – one in which the Earth has largely been rendered uninhabitable, and only two populated nations remain: the rich United

Federation of Britain, and the working class region known as The Colony (Australia). A gravity train connects the two nations, shooting passengers through the centre of the planet to the other side in only 17 minutes.

This is the only semblance of an imaginative thought that the film ever engages with.

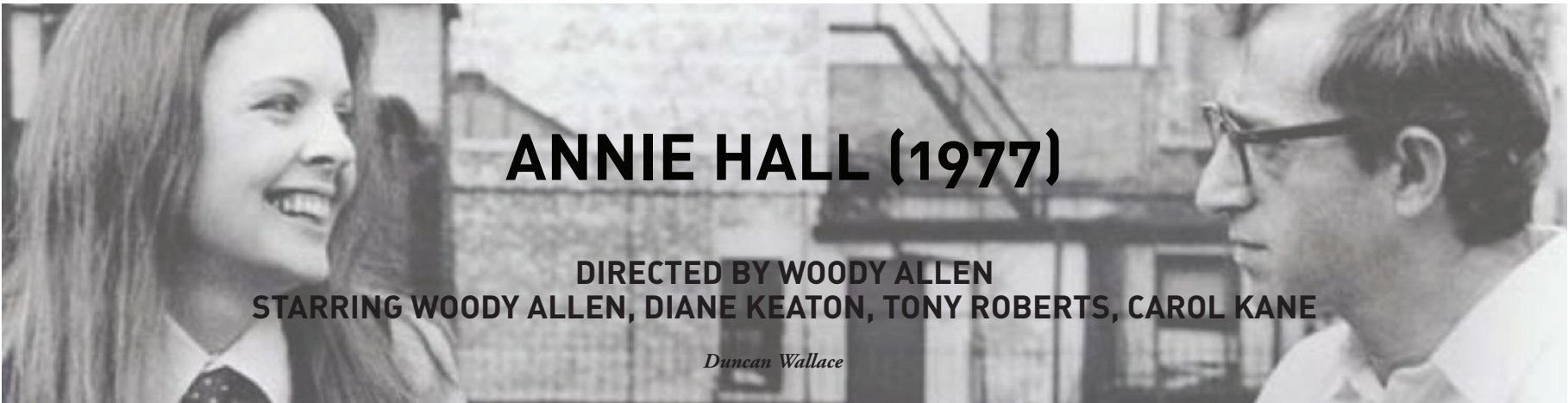
The film largely follows the same story as the original, rendering any of the mystery surrounding Quaid’s memory and mental state completely inert. Character background and pathos are virtually nonexistent. Not once is the audience presented with any reason to care whether Quaid lives or dies, nor are we given any reason to sympathise with the implied “plight” of those living in The Colony. Quaid’s wife Lori (Kate Beckinsale, the director’s wife), for example, is the kind of strong female film character that modern society so often desires. Yet her role in the film is significantly undermined by the fact that, aside

from it being “her job”, we’re never supplied with an adequate explanation as to why she hunts Quaid with such desperate, vendetta-like ferocity.

Total Recall is ultimately a film designed to shake quite a lot of money from quite a lot of people in a very short time. From the dubstep-infused soundtrack, to the cinematography (lens flares are NOT a substitute for narrative), to the horrifically poor casting of flavour-of-the-month actor Bryan Cranston (*Breaking Bad*) as the villainous Coahaagen, this film will go out of date faster than the milk in your fridge. It offers nothing more than an unintelligent two-hour bang-bang shoot-em-up on a futuristic backdrop, and will be easily forgotten in three months time.

Total Recall is an expendable film. Don’t waste your expendable money seeing it.

Zero fucks given out of five.



“A relationship, I think, is like a shark. It has to constantly move forward or it dies.”

“And I think what we got on our hands is a dead shark”, the film’s protagonist candidly concedes. It’s this sort of quick-witted, fast-paced and refreshingly honest dialogue that defines the screenplay of Woody Allen’s *Annie Hall*. The opening scene, a short monologue which neatly frames personal worries with a Groucho Marx witticism, gives a remarkably accurate snippet of what is to come: lots and lots of talking. Thankfully, the talking is generously dispersed with comedy and carefully punctuated with self-reflection. I’ve always admired the way that Woody Allen films seem to finish on an unexpectedly profound moment, somehow reconciling the pedantic wondering of their characters with the multitude of signposted references to popular culture. The significance of this film for Allen’s career and the modern romantic comedy genre is difficult to overstate. It marks a shift from Allen’s earlier dabbling in slapstick humour and heralds the entry of a talented stand-up comedian into the world of innovative movie making.

The plot, like the life of its protagonist – Alvy Singer (Allen) – is a little chaotic. The narrative winds its way awkwardly back through his life to show us how it happened. “It”, in this case, is a break-up. Right from the start, we’re given the painful admission that “Annie and I broke up, and I still can’t get my head around it.” Alvy’s first communicated thoughts – which often break the fourth wall – quizzically reveal his pathological obsession with self-analysis (which later explains his affinity for psycho-analysis) and take us through selected memories of his childhood. We’re presented with the picture of someone deeply preoccupied with the big, impossible questions in life which never get the satisfactory answers they demand. These inclinations leave an

impressionable young boy, and a recently-turned-40-year-old man, with floating feelings of futility. The scene is at least partly set: Alvy is a bit aimless and perennially shaky with human relationships, but he’s smart, funny and well-intentioned. It takes a serendipitous meeting with the one and only Annie Hall (Diane Keaton) at a tennis court to really get things going. Annie is the quirky, beautiful, composed match for Alvy and his nervously chatty ramblings. It’s a boy-meets-girl adventure with wit, charm and, I’m told, some trend-setting fashion on Keaton’s part. After an appealingly awkward conversation, Annie and Alvy strike up a natural friendship. Theirs is an important relationship with lots of spark and passion, but its romantic appeal fades when Alvy and Annie’s individual insecurities are amplified by each other’s. A year after their foreshadowed break-up, they reunite in the important setting of their romance, New York City. Alvy once again admires the beautiful Annie and laments the nature of relationships as “totally irrational and crazy and absurd”, but as something we go through simply because we need them.

Allen has a great tendency to frame his characters’ troubles, and to capture important lessons, with jokes. This is probably why *Annie Hall* was such an advancement for him: the humour isn’t just for laughter. The comedy with which Allen traverses such a comprehensive range of topics – all of which clearly carry significant personal interest for him – is remarkable. Take, for instance, his insecurities about Jewish identity (“the rest of the country looks upon New York like we’re left-wing, communist, Jewish, homosexual pornographers”) and annoyance with ineffective psycho-analysis (“I was in analysis with a strict Freudian and, if you kill yourself, they make you pay for the sessions you miss”). The film is a

delightful, but carefully managed, extension of Allen’s earlier career as a joke writer for local newspapers. I should mention, though, that the film’s best comedy belongs to a famous balcony scene where subtitles appear to reveal Annie and Alvy’s actual thoughts (“he probably thinks I’m a yo-yo”, “I wonder what she looks like naked” etc.) in contrast to the pleasantly neutral comments of their small talk about the “aesthetic criteria” of photography.

The wonderful thing is that all this comedy, all this talking, comes together to make a really accessible point about everyday life. A good point of reference is actually the film’s working title, *Anhedonia* (a fancy word for the inability to experience pleasure). Annie’s preference for marijuana just before having sex, much to the disapproval of Alvy, serves as a nice representation of Allen’s point that we require artificially constructed moods to fully attain pleasurable experiences. Left to our own natural devices, we’re too insecure and troubled to ever feel entirely happy with things. It’s not that life is irreversibly depressing; it’s just that our joys are a little transient and easily drowned out by undercurrent anxiety, uncertainty and – in Alvy’s case – paranoia. Allen recreates the human condition as an ironic feeling that life is too short and too precious, despite it always feeling dissatisfying. Alvy’s neurotic troubles are a shining demonstration of this, but so is Annie’s personal policy of “flexibility”, and they both in their own ways call into question the sustainability of their relationship. Their relationship woes, in the backdrop of Alvy’s much bigger woes, conveys a discrepancy between the big questions in life and our day-to-day dilemmas that makes *Annie Hall* the kind of high calibre romantic comedy you wish Hollywood still made.

FILM REVIEW: HOW TO SURVIVE A PLAGUE

David France | USA | 110 Mins

Basil Curtis

Let’s make one thing clear: “This isn’t a movie about what AIDS did to us, this is a movie about what we did to AIDS.” This bold statement from David France, director of *How to Survive a Plague*, is indicative of the theme of empowerment which runs through the film, which showed at the Melbourne International Film Festival hot off the heels of the 19th International AIDS Conference. This Conference was fittingly held in Washington DC, the same stage where the AIDS warriors depicted in the film take on the government and medical establishment.

The film follows two activist groups, ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and its offshoot TAG (Treatment Action Group), as they protest/lobby against existing treatment methods for AIDS, both social and pharmaceutical, and research/innovate new solutions. This pioneering work eventually turned the once always-fatal disease into a manageable chronic condition. Using over 700 hours of archival footage, *How to Survive a Plague* creates a timeline of AIDS and activism over a decade, from diagnosis in the mid 80s to the protease inhibitor revolution of early 90s.

The telling of this activist story is vital. ACT UP fought for nine years, demanding changes in research, drug development and treatment approaches which ultimately turned HIV/AIDS from a death sentence into a treatable condition. In doing so they had a massive and lasting effect on the medical research field and subsequently inspired a future of protesters (think Occupy Wall street).

Cheryl Overs, a senior Research Fellow and once upon a time ACT UP demonstrator, says ACT UP and TAG “Revolutionized patient-doctor relationships, questioned the US medical system, big pharma and international trade law; drove the rewriting of drug trial protocols and introduced the notion of prevention and care services being led by affected communities.” The film recognises the extraordinary achievement of these activists as what it was - one of the most successful public initiatives in American history.

HIV and the camcorder are about the same age, having both came to the market about 30 years ago.

How to Survive a Plague shows what our generation never saw – the fight. People fighting for what they believe in, people fighting self-hatred and exhaustion, and quite literally, people fighting for their lives.

The film drops audiences into the middle of this war zone, amid controversial protests and fiery basement meetings. Its credibility is enhanced by the fact that the cinematic chronology doesn’t brush over the darker side of activism, such as the extreme New York protests on Wall Street and at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. The ever-rising political tensions as well as the internal disagreements within-between the AIDS coalitions give a distinctly human face to the struggle. The shattering failures of the activists, resulting in more loss of life, and the triumphant victories achieved in spite of this, are ruthlessly played out in equal measure.

Director David France is a journalist who has reported on the AIDS since day dot. Like the AIDS activists who took it upon themselves to find a cure despite not having scientific backgrounds, France committed himself to telling the story of their efforts although he had never before made a feature film. *How to Survive a Plague*, in the style of all good social justice documentaries, concludes with a call to action. The theme for this year’s World AIDS Day, “HIV is still here,” is imbued with France’s message that the fight must continue. In true Cinéma vérité fashion, the film is as much as about the fighters behind the AIDS activism as it is about the fight itself; as much about the strength of standing united, as it is the remarkable strength of a single human spirit.

Today, while it may seem that the ‘West’ is cured, in the US nearly half of the 1.1 million people living with HIV are not on treatment. AIDS remains the most stigmatized disease in human history. “The



Image courtesy of MIFF

Global South and the US ethnic minorities, indigenous people, sex workers, drug users and women,” says Cheryl Overs, “ have not benefited from antiretroviral drug treatment and other responses to the same extent as gay communities in rich countries for whom the consequences of HIV have been significantly (but not entirely) alleviated.” This also reflects Cheryl’s fear for the film: that it would be simply, “A profound snapshot of the experience of white privileged men.” It isn’t, but only just.

Dr. Jennifer Power of La Trobe University, whose PhD looked at community responses to HIV/AIDS in Australia, points out that *How to Survive a Plague* does what other AIDS documentaries do not; “It explores the impact of AIDS activism more generally and actually asks how different things might have been if community activism had not been part of the AIDS response.”

The film is a timely reminder of just how far we’ve come but, more importantly, how far we’ve got to go in the battle against AIDS. 28 million people globally still cannot afford treatment. *How to Survive a Plague* is a must see for all but especially for those of us lucky enough to grow up in world where AIDS is no longer a death sentence – we are beholden to those who did not survive the plague.

How to Survive a Plague screened at the 2012 Melbourne International Film Festival and will open in cinemas late September.

INTERVIEW

FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH LAST DINOSAURS

Dina Amin

Being on the telephone with a member of Last Dinosaurs is enough to make my nerves jittery and my voice dry. However, Sam-Gethin Jones, the bass guitarist of the Brisbane indie band, is incredibly laid back, a factor which quickly puts an end to my nervous stuttering. Having just released their debut album *In a Million Years*, the Last Dinosaurs boys are having the time of their lives, sky rocketing to number eight on the ARIA charts and gearing up to do a UK tour at the end of the month.

In a Million Years deals with the brevity of relationships and youth. These themes were inspired by the lead singer Sean's recent breakup, and the band's collective interest in the idea of time and space; "The idea of time is

something that fascinates all of us," says Gethin-Jones. Influenced by the song writing skills and eclectic beats of Foals, The Strokes and Phoenix, *In a Million Years* blends the genres of indie rock and power pop, resulting in a variety of catchy tunes that explore universal struggles and significant everyday moments.

I was first exposed to the band at the 2010 Falls Festival and was intrigued by their name. I spent half of their performance fantasising about the origin and meaning behind it, wondering if the band had some evolutionary theory about humans and dinosaurs. However, as it turns out, Last Dinosaurs is the name of a song in Japan that has resonated deeply with the band's drummer. Japan is an impor-

tant place for the band; they recently completed a tour there, which was extra special for the band's other three members, Sean, Lachlan and Dan, all of whom are half-Japanese.

Last Dinosaurs more recently performed at Splendour in the Grass, where they shared the stage with a number of local and international wonders including Angus Stone, Jack White and The Smashing Pumpkins. Gethin-Jones gets incredibly excited here and enthuses that "Splendour was ridiculous. The goose bumps I got when I heard the crowd's reaction is definitely something I am never going to forget." When asked if he had any anxieties about playing in front of over ten thousand people, Gethin-Jones confesses that he was worried that they would only be "*that band*" that people watch whilst waiting in line at the hot dog stand. However, "everyone knew our songs and was singing along." Gethin-

Jones describes this as the highlight of his career so far.

Last Dinosaurs also recently gave an exclusive performance with Bloc Party, which resulted in the English band trying to learn Last Dinosaurs' *Zoom* on the guitar. This was a huge honour for the boys, as Bloc Party is one of their favourite bands. When asked who he would want to collaborate with, dead or alive, Gethin-Jones is quick to answer: "Andre 3000 or D'Angelo. I would love to jump on the keys and do a soul album with D'Angelo."

With their performance at Splendour and their tours in Japan and the UK, it is clear that the profile of Last Dinosaurs is growing. The band is currently gearing up for their Satellites Tour around Australia, which is on sale now and selling fast. They have announced a second gig at the Corner Hotel in Richmond on Thursday the 25th of October.

ALBUM REVIEW

THEATRE IS EVIL

AMANDA PALMER & THE GRAND THEFT ORCHESTRA

Pia Salvatore

With all the anticipation since her first solo release in 2008, Amanda Palmer is taking another giant leap towards great success. Palmer's extreme success with her Kickstarter campaign is only one element in the grand scheme of things. The power that can be expected of Palmer's performances is behind every one of the songs on this record. The piano-led ballads, laced with Palmer's poetic writings, are a testament to the dedication that the artist has to her music.



ALBUM REVIEW

MATURE THEMES

ARIEL PINK'S HAUNTED GRAFFITI

Pia Salvatore

The nonsensical lyrics, the deadpan voice and the combination of the childish with the very adult in this latest offering from Ariel Pink is a strange mix, to say the least. Anybody lacking the eccentricities of Pink would probably not be able to pull off an album that rides waves of childish tunes with lyrics like "blowjobs of death". Yet at the same time, Pink's deadpan weirdness perfectly transitions into chorus jingles reminiscent of Elvis Costello, most notably in the title track. It may drag on a bit by the end,

but this amount of strange can only be taken in small doses.



TOP 5 SONGS

...ABOUT DEMOCRACY

Pia Salvatore

Leonard Cohen – Democracy

Who better to sing about democracy than one of the world's finest songwriters? With all the sentimentality he is famed for, Leonard Cohen knows how to speak about freedom.

Twisted Sister – We're Not Gonna Take It

Big hair, big make-up and big costumes, these guys knew how to do it. They also knew how to get a message into their songs.

Public Enemy – Fight the Power

At the request of Spike Lee, Public Enemy came out with a pretty cracking

song against the 'powers that be'. While it might be quite time specific, i.e. 1989, and it probably won't be used at any political rallies anytime soon, you can still pump out this song at a party.

Bob Dylan – Times Are A Changing

Amongst all of his songs expressing some kind of dissatisfaction with the world, the one thing that Bob Dylan could be certain of was that times are always changing - or so this song goes.

Marvin Gaye – What's Going On

The title is pretty much to the point. Ask the questions and try to find the answers Marvin Gaye was after.

GIG REVIEW

JINJA SAFARI

HI-FI BAR, AUGUST 10TH

Pia Salvatore

The Hi-Fi Bar became a haze of hair wreaths, floral prints and ponchos, with Jinja Safari's fans embracing every aspect of the jungle-inspired music they had come to see. With the anticipation building for the Sydney-based packet of energy, the front row positions were claimed quickly and early. Jinja Safari's on-stage presence can't be described as anything less than infectious. Hanging from the lighting or standing on drums and amps, these boys know how to create a party atmosphere - even if it

did verge slightly into overkill. Don't let stage antics fool you into thinking they lack any musical ability, though. Performances of Peter Pan, Toothless Grin and a cracking rendition of Mermaid were brought to life by a group that genuinely seems to love performing. With no premeditated encore (and kudos to the band for that) they may have left the crowd wanting more, but definitely did not leave them disappointed.

GIG GUIDE



Image: Leah McIntosh

Pia Salvatore

Mia Dyson
Saturday 22 September
Corner Hotel

Going on tour for her new album, Mia Dyson is making her way back to Australia after visiting the USA to share her sultry voice and guitar talent.

Dress code: rock babes.

Pond
Sunday 23 September
Corner Hotel

The Perth psych-rockers are hitting the road, and playing a few mesmerising shows before hiding away to record something, somewhere.

Dress code: Hobo chic.

Cash Savage
Tuesday 25 September
The Toff in Town

With a swag of new material under their belts, Cash Savage will be topping

off a mad year of touring with a residency at The Toff.

Dress code: Black, black, black.

Eagle And The Worm
Friday 28 September
Northcote Social Club

Party starting nine-piece EATW will squash on to the stage at the Social Club and fill the room with their unique presence.

Dress code: Your finest party shirt.

Peter Combe
Thursday 4 October
Northcote Social Club

The legendary kid's singer/songwriter, now an adult cult hero, is putting on a double-header performance. It's bound to be a bunch of fun.

Dress code: A face washer soaked in orange juice.



The way we consume our beloved music has certainly changed over the years. Gone are the days when owning physical albums was the only real option. People used to cue in line after gigs to get the artist’s signature on the cover of their vinyl LP, and sing along at home with the pull-out lyric booklet. Today, we can download, stream, sync and purchase in various mediums and of course experience music live. With the aid of the Internet, a musician’s work can be heard anywhere in the world in an instant. However, with digital and online distribution, something has been lost.

At Jack the Bear’s studio in Brunswick, there is a poster on the wall that says “You never remember your first download.” “It’s such a valid reflection on the current state of music distribution,” says Charlie Gleeson, member of local pop/indie duo Brightly. “There is very little time spent with an artist, savouring them and learning them.” Why trek to the music store to hunt for something they might not stock, when anyone with access to an iPhone can browse, buy and listen within a few minutes?

Most of us would be guilty of buying an album on iTunes, converting a track from YouTube, or using file

sharing sources like torrenting. We want to satisfy our music craving instantly, digitally and cheaply. Despite this, there has been renewed interest in a medium that was more the norm for our parents, grandparents, DJs and music enthusiasts alike: the vinyl record.

Having released their two-track album *Sarah* on 7” vinyl, as well as CD and download format, Brightly are just one of many other artists releasing in the ‘triple threat’ style. When asked “why vinyl?” the band said “we’ve always been attracted to vinyl’s tangible nature, and there is a warmth to the sound we couldn’t replicate any other way.” The sound that a record generates right before your eyes is unmatched in depth and richness.

According to statistics collected by the Australian Record Industry Association (ARIA), 45,000 vinyl albums were sold in 2011 compared to a measly 19,000 in 2007. So it’s definitely not a medium that’s fading away. Yet, as John Topper of Triple R’s ‘New & Groovy’ and Northside Records points out, “when they say there’s an increase in record sales, it’s coming off a very, very small margin.” When you compare it with digital album sales, which topped 9 million last year, it is clear how tiny the portion of the market

that vinyl has is. Records may not outsell digital or CDs, but its presence as a valuable medium is being recognised on an industry level.

Why are we suddenly favouring the record? What does it have that is attracting people all over again? It must be more than just an extension of the hipster mantra that all that’s old is now new. As Topper suggests, “It’s hard to tell if something like that is just a fashion [...] A lot of young people come in and buy records; whether they’ll be doing it in ten years or not, well then we’ll know whether it’s something [...] or if it’s just something to show your girlfriend.”

“Digital medium in a lot of ways [has] opened up a lot of people to other types of music, and let them explore the original format it came out on. It’s quite interesting, when I was growing up, it was really hard to find the music, now there’s so many formats it’s easy to find. [Vinyl is] a lot more user friendly than CD or download, they’re pretty dull objects, whereas a record is fascinating.” Whether or not vinyl records appeal to you, they have certainly stood the test of time and earned their place as one of the most original and unique ways to listen to music.

FINDING THE GROOVE

Like the sound of embracing the vinyl revolution? Well, the first step is to get your hands on a turntable. There are hundreds of options on the market. For a start try eBay, garage sales, op-shops or even the attic. As well as a turntable, a good quality set of speakers is essential to creating the best sound.

Step two: Start digging (a term used by vinyl collectors, meaning to literally look through records in a store). Half of the fun with records is ‘the discovery factor’; the thrill of the dig. Record stores are hidden all across Melbourne. If you know the right places to look you’ll find something to satisfy that itch. Try Northside Records in Gertude Street for the best funk and soul in town. Hip-hop lovers should check out Obese Records in Prahran. Mainly Jazz Records & Books and Pure Pop are both worth the short hike to St Kilda. Polyester Records, in Flinders Lane and Brunswick Street, has a nice eclectic mix. Some of my best finds have come from the most unexpected of places, including op-shops and pop up crate digger sales. However, the most dollar savvy place to build your collection is by sorting through your parents or even grandparents’ old collections.

My advice? Dig deep into the music and have a real fossick around; you never know what you might find.

MAMA ALTO’S MELBOURNE FRINGE LUCKY DIP

In the lead-up to the Melbourne Fringe Festival throughout late September and October, Fringe artist Mama Alto (Porgy & Bess Project) presents this lucky dip vox-pop tour of just nine of the 315 shows at this year’s Festival.

BLOODLINES - A GOTHIC CABARET

Bloodlines – A Gothic Cabaret is a side-splitting and pants-wetting joyride through realms of darkness and nightmare with the innocently demonic Bradley Storer. Using tales drawn from the dusty crypts of his own family history, Bradley explores the boundaries between past and present, imagination and reality and the nature of evil – laced with hints of insanity and cyanide. This gothic-indie cabaret, with songs from artists ranging from Rodgers & Hammerstein to Regina Spektor, will tickle your funny bone then tear it out for good measure.

BODY OBSCURE OBJECT: On the Intimacy of Seeing

Innovative in technological design and style, choreographer Shian Law has teamed up with video artist James Wright, designer Matthew Adey and composer Duane Morrison to deliver an interdisciplinary experimentation, *BODY OBSCURE OBJECT*. The new media dance work explores the polarities of the spectacular and the intimate, mediated through the physical body both en masse and in solitude. Part live performance, part cinematic experience, the piece explores the body as a site for visual spectacle and ritual.

DANCE+ANECDOTE

Devised by two independent Melbourne dance-makers, *dance+anecdote* presents contemporary dance in an immersive installation experience. The audience engages with sensuous live and video works within a unique, vast and expressive warehouse space. Co-deviser Maximilian explains: “When we first started the project, we already had choreographies developed, but as soon as we saw the venue, all that went out the window. We started making site-specific work

that also embodied the performers. The results are surprisingly intimate, dynamic and funny.”

DasSHOKU SHAKE!: A Japanese Australian Butoh Cabaret Extravaganza

DasSHOKU SHAKE! is the fourth work in the award winning, nationally and internationally sold-out DasSHOKU repertoire. Butoh Punkess Yumi Umiumare ignites her next infamous DasSHOKU Cabaret, bursting from the shaking earth. Osaka’s Theatre Gumbo, Japanese guest artists plus four of Melbourne’s shock-toy acolytes create a funky cross-cultural bizarre emo shake-up! Jap-pop and white mysticism assault Buddhist Heart sutra!

THE FOUR ACCORDIONISTS OF THE APOCALYPSE

Frigg, Norse Goddess of Fertility, descends to Earth to see why she’s no longer worshipped and to address a crisis in human fertility. There she finds her wayward husband Woden, God of Death and Storms, busy with the El Nino effect, global warfare and seducing mortals. An absurdist original work with musical score by Sofia Chapman, directed by Jo Loth and featuring ARIA award winner Zulya Kamalova’s exquisite vocals, *The Four Accordionists of the Apocalypse* brings disparate elements such as music, humour and symbolism together in its premiere production.

PORGY & BESS PROJECT: Jazz Interpretations of a Legendary Classic

Mama Alto’s very own show! Surrender yourself to timeless songs interpreted by a unique voice that defies gender. Mama Alto purrs and smoulders in an atmospheric temple of kitsch and cabaret, The Butterfly Club. *Porgy & Bess Project* is an evocative

dialogue between the immortal songs of Gershwin’s monumental work and the unique and haunting jazz countertenor vocals of Benny ‘Mama Alto’ Dimas, accompanied by the piano stylings of Tiffanni Walton.

THE SÉANCE

The Séance is an intimate performance encounter where audiences of only 10 people attempt to make contact with the ghost of a dead celebrity, conducted in a secret location by NO SHOW, the team behind Next Wave’s *Shotgun Wedding*. Sitters will commune with a restless spirit that may be trying to send a message from the Other Side. The experience is a compelling and darkly funny dream of pop excess, media mythologizing, and the allure of self-destruction.

THE WELL

When the earth’s magnetic poles flip and the planet falls out of orbit, life on the ground gets colder and crazier. Long extinct civilizations turn up in the drive through, ex-girlfriends turn into crude oil and the end of the universe is a giant super-charged cloud of candy floss.

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS: A WEASEL’S TALE

So you think you know the story of *The Wind in the Willows*? Well... this is the real story: *The Weasel’s Tale*. This classic gets turned on its head as the baddies turn good and the goodies turn bad. Step into the Wild Wood and follow the weasels on their raucous adventure to reclaim the family home.

For dates, times and bookings of all these shows, plus 302 more, please visit www.melbournefringe.com.au

THEATRE REVIEW: CHESS

Carmel Wallis

“Each game of chess means there’s one less Variation left to be played Each day got through means one or two Less mistakes remain to be made”

Against the backdrop of the Cold War, any chance to reign superior is seen as a crucial one for both the USA and the USSR. Forget the space race – the Chess World Championship is where not only international reputations, but love and alliances, are bitterly fought out.

The Production Company takes a gamble with this performance. *Chess* has been historically difficult to stage and often struggled to find the right audience. A musical with a score written by former ABBA members, a hefty dose of chess metaphors and (at times) literal choreographed games played on stage is not for everyone. However, as usual, the Production Company stages this show giving it everything they’ve got, and, as usual, it pays off.

Whilst readers might be familiar with the ‘80s hit

“One Night in Bangkok” (or might not be, given that this is a university publication and the majority of you would have been born in the ‘90s), the rest of the story might be less well known.

While a team of Soviet loyalists support their chess player, the well-meaning and by the book Anatoly Sergievsky, America’s Frederick “Freddie” Trumper is joined by his Hungarian born lover, Florence Vassy. The Arbiter introduces the players and the importance of the match, and the stakes are stressed by those on either side – the whole world is watching and the winner of this game establishes the credentials of his nation.

Enter the development of relationship between Sergievsky and Vassy, and the game’s consequences no longer only entail diplomatic relations, but also love.

Defection, blackmail, betrayal and drama all ensue as the musical continues and the title of World Champion is contested. The Hungarian revolution torments Vassy, as she’s constantly torn between attempting to balance her love life, the game itself,

and the freedom of her father, who remains in Soviet hands.

The performances, both lead and supporting, are flawless in this show – the Production Company consistently turns out exceptionally tight performances within a relatively short rehearsal time, far exceeding shows with a much longer preparation. Silvie Paladino as Florence Vassy, Martin Crewes as Frederick Trumper and Simon Gleeson as Anatoly Sergievsky all turn out extraordinary lead performances, supported by a more than able cast with an uncanny capacity for Russian accents.

The production itself embraces, rather than skirts around, the camp nature of the show and the ludicrousness of the plot. Producing the show with such good humour and self-awareness however, doesn’t mean the performances themselves are anything short of exceptional.

Director Gale Edwards has done an extraordinary job balancing the tension of acknowledging this musical’s humour whilst telling the story in earnest.

A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Olivia Tolich marvels at the wonders of Mesopotamia

“Reproduction of a 6th Century BCE artifact at British Museum”. This is quite possibly any museum connoisseur’s nightmare. There is nothing worse than hiking all the way over to the other side of the city to see some old stuff, only to find that you’re older than most of the objects in the room. Whilst I was disappointed by last year’s Tutankhamen exhibit and its cleverly deceptive marketing (Tutankhamen wasn’t even there!), this was definitely not true of the new Mesopotamia exhibit hosted by the Melbourne Museum.

Having studied 1st Year Archaeology, evidently I’m an expert in all things old, or so I told my mother, my companion for the day. Audio commentary at the ready, I stepped through a time machine into one of the most interactive exhibits I have ever experienced. Jewels glittered in the dim mood lighting, supposedly

ancient-sounding elevator music hummed around the clusters of pushy patrons, and large clay pots and tablets lined the walls.

Computer technology allowed us to study details of the artwork, explaining the truly intricate craftsmanship that is honestly astounding to behold. Colour was poured into the dull brown of the clay and animations brought the static actions to life. It was magical.

The audio commentary provided not only information about the artifacts in front of me, but a complete history of the culture of those who lived in Mesopotamia: their homes, their religion, celebrations and customs. Finishing with the Tower of Babel, we were able to see historical representations of the unproven first skyscraper, and learn about its alleged origins in the Bible and ancient myths of Sumer.

Months into the exhibition’s run, I still struggled to get close enough to the objects. Like a never-ending game of Pac-Man, I was jostled and bumped, winding my way through the maze of knowledge. Punctuating the general murmur of discussion was a young boy of about ten who began to spout facts to his younger brother. His knowledge and interest in this ancient world was truly inspiring, and slightly restored my faith in the younger generations.

For young and old, seeing this exhibition is definitely a necessity. A day spent in the past, witnessing the feats achieved without modern technology and pursuing knowledge for the sake of knowledge is always going to be a day well spent. Then, we may come back to the future a little bit wiser and appreciative of our origins.

ACCELERATING LINKAGES BETWEEN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE UK

Anna Carrig

In 2009, an innovative pilot program which endeavors to provide development opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people engaged in creative industries was launched by the British Council. This program, Accelerate, offers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the opportunity to travel to the UK for professional development and to build lasting connections between the two countries. Three years down the track, the program has gone from strength to strength.

As Director of the British Council in Australia Nick Marchand says, one of the beliefs underpinning the program is that “future leaders need the time and support to develop their own career plans, explore their leadership strengths and weaknesses, and build local and international networks.”

The British Council also recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative artists, art administrators and others in the industry are often not represented in senior levels of management and leadership in the Australian art sector. Positive signs that this trend is being redressed are already beginning to show, with alumni from past years of the program having formed strong collaborative projects with The Globe Theatre, Welsh National Theatre and the River of Music performances on the River Thames prior to the London Olympics this year.

The creative sector in Australia is somewhat limited, and artists often struggle to transcend barriers to success. As such, the international quality of this program is of great value to artists. One of last year’s participants speaks highly of Accelerate as “It introduced me to the rest of the world.”

In 2012, the Accelerate Program attracted 40 applicants, with 14 shortlisted and around five individuals to be selected later this year to take part in the UK residency. Shortlisted candidates have the chance to put the UK devised theories on cultural leadership including the technique of ‘action learning’ into practice over a weekend workshop. Over a few

days, the shortlisted cohort will work collectively to develop creative strategies for addressing real challenges they face, each contributing their own unique skills and knowledge.

The applicants specialise in a wide array of disciplines. In 2012, Accelerate has brought together individuals involved in design, fashion, graphic, photography, new media, theatre, architecture and dance.

“The long-term goal is to make Indigenous theatre as prominent and respected as Western creative traditions”

Isaac Drandic is the director of the Ilbijerri Theatre Company, and has been shortlisted for this year’s program. Ilbijerri is the longest running Indigenous Theatre Company in Australia, and the only one in Victoria.

Drandic speaks excitedly of being involved in the world of Indigenous theatre at the moment, which he says is “growing and growing”. Ilbijerri has recently staged exciting high profile collaborations at the Sydney Opera House and with the Melbourne International Arts Festival, all of which raise the profile of Indigenous actors, playwrights and the stories they tell.

Ilbijerri’s recent show *Binjareb Pinjarra* tackled some raw themes, including the disputed histories of Australia, with humour and strength. Drandic talks about the show as “a response to the challenge to the history books,” drawing particularly on the experience of cast members and their curiosity to learn more about the Pinjarra incident. This incident, which took place in Pinjarra, Western Australia, was initially recorded as a ‘battle’ but is now considered by

contemporary historians to have been a massacre of Aboriginal people.

Keeping in mind the emerging success of companies like Ilbijerri and Bangarra Dance Company in Australia and abroad, there is evidence that many people are interested in Indigenous stories. In Drandic’s words “there is a great hunger out there for it.” Further to the function of theatre and the arts as a source of entertainment, there is also an inherent educational opportunity.

Asking Drandic what he thinks is unique about Indigenous theatre he tells of how “A lot of Indigenous theatre has a direct call to the audience. It allows the audience into the storyteller’s relationship with the story that they’re telling. It becomes this personal thing. It’s part of your history and your story.”

Drandic, if successful, will join a host of talented Indigenous artists and creative practitioners to take to the UK sometime in the next few months. Drandic will be able to take his message, and the message of many Indigenous Australians, to a broader stage, and receive the support necessary to make Indigenous stories a permanent part of the Australian arts scene. The long-term goal is to make Indigenous theatre as prominent and respected as Western creative traditions.

It has been calculated that 1.3 million people in the UK are employed in creative industries. The scope and impact of this industry for creating employment, encouraging a dialogue with the public and generating an image of Australia for cultural consumers abroad show why it is important to address the disparities of access and representation faced by Indigenous Australians within this employment field.

The message is a simple one; Indigenous creatives should be empowered to go abroad, be brave and bold and to hope that through intercultural experiences these individuals will accelerate the development of our domestic sector.

KILLING BIRDS WITHOUT STONES: SHOULD WE FRET ABOUT GM?

Lewis Gurr

Genetically modified food could save the world – although it almost certainly won’t. Take, for example, the genetic modifications made to cassava, a root vegetable eaten as a subsistence food by millions of people in the third world. Cassava has already been genetically modified to produce Vitamin A. It has also been engineered to use the cyanide it naturally produces to make protein instead. Huge numbers of children on cassava-based diets suffer from vitamin A deficiency or malnutrition and such a GM crop could make a huge difference to their lives.

The unfortunate reality, however, is that the vast majority of GM crops grown today are simply herbicide resistant versions of plants. These are no more nutritious than the originals but allow farmers to spray herbicide far more liberally, which only amplifies the obvious negative environmental consequences. Some genetic modifications are completely harmless, such as one where scientists modified a tomato to put back a sugar gene that had been lost over the years of folks breeding the best looking (rather than the best tasting) tomatoes. Yet those scientists weren’t allowed to actually eat the tomato due to restrictions on GM food, despite the fact that the tomato they made was

arguably more natural than the ones we buy in stores. The frustrations and missed opportunities that seem to comprise the history of GM food are epitomised by what happened in the USA recently.

The story began when Monsanto, owner of a huge portion of the world’s GM patents, invented a new kind of soybean that produces Omega-3 fatty acids. As everybody who watches television advertisements knows (which is probably none of you since you all just illegally download your TV shows), a diet high in Omega-3s will guarantee your survival and good health well into a time in the distant future when the last post-modernist is finally, thankfully, dead. As somebody deprived of the fat of over-fished fish, I thought this was good news. Too good, as it turns out. Monsanto, in yet another example of the unique power of capitalism to not only solve the world’s problems in an ingenious manner but also remould the solution into something completely useless that sells for slightly more money, realised that fish oil is worth more than soy milk and so took out a patent (US no. 20090202672) outlining their plans to feed the soy products to farmed fish, and then extract the fish oil (now even higher in the mysterious and

powerful ‘Omega-3’).

Aside from the obvious fact that it would be easier to just eat the bloody soybeans, fish farming is a particularly nasty practice tolerated in part because of a pervasive myth that fish are not sentient and/or do not suffer like cuter land animals do. This myth is partly due to the fact that fish lack a developed limbic system and partly due to the dearth of research that has been done on the subject. This is starting to turn around, as science inches its way towards common sense conclusions that are pretty obvious to anybody who cares to pay attention (much in the same way that it took western science hundreds of years to acknowledge that we might want to try to avoid subjecting chimpanzees to a vast array of cruel experiments). Still, more research is being done on the subject. A Canadian meta-study by Chandroo and Duncan that assessed the available evidence concluded that fish are sentient and do suffer, and warned about the high densities, feeding strategies, genomic manipulation, handling & transportation methods and slaughter techniques of fish farms. It is of course possible that Monsanto will use the soy in other products, and this is only an American example, but it demonstrates how a potentially useful breakthrough in genetically modified food is being put in jeopardy by the desire to make the greatest possible profit.

This is why it is a little bit annoying and incredibly silly to say that all genetically modified food is good or bad. A potato could be modified to cure herpes, or it could be modified to produce a poison gas that kills all of the world’s grandparents.* It seems wise to be very wary of those who are always in opposition or always in support of GM food – it’s difficult to make a blanket judgement about such a broad issue without resting on some false assumptions and prejudice. Let’s just be sensible, but also make sure evil Monsanto keep their nasty ‘food’ out of Australia. If I may poignantly conclude by paraphrasing the great Cookie Monster, “GM is a sometimes food”.

*neither of these things are, to the best of my knowledge, possible.



LECTURER PROFILE

MICHAEL MORGAN

Lewis Gurr

Position:
Associate Professor, Faculty of Science

Credentials:
• BSc Monash University
• PhD Theoretical Physics, Monash University

Michael Morgan has been the head of the Physics Department at Monash for the past seven years, and one of his current areas of research involves investigating quantum vortices, which are topological defects that arise in a beam of electrons which are passed through an aberrated lens. Techniques such as the ones are currently being developed will one day enable image resolution down to the picameter (1/1000th of a nanometer, which is about 1/6000th of the width of a human hair). This will enable devices to be engineered on incredibly small scales. I spoke to Michael about his work, and life as a physicist.

Do physicists spend a lot of time philosophising?

No, they generally don’t. Of course after a few drinks they do, but generally most physicists are very pragmatic and they won’t spend their life worrying about the interpretation of quantum mechanics. As Richard Feynman, a very famous theoretical physicist, said: “it’s safe to say that no-one really understands quantum mechanics”. So worry all you like but it won’t do much. Quantum mechanics is bizarre, as you’re probably aware, but physicists don’t often spend a lot of time worrying; there are a small handful of physicists who spend their time worrying about that but they’re in a minority... so no. Every physicist probably has thought about it at some stage,

but we don’t lay awake at night worried about it. But we sometimes lay awake at night worrying about pragmatic things.”

How do you find the money and time to do research?

I think good scientists will always find a way. And there are some people that say ‘oh I can’t do research because I haven’t got this or I haven’t got this time to do it’, but some of the most productive physicists in my department are the people with some of the heaviest teach loads; equally, some are very productive on low teaching loads. I find that if you fundamentally want to address questions that you are interested in you make the time to do it.

So would you choose to be a physicist again?

Yep – I mean for all the faults and for all the difficulties that universities have, there’s very few jobs where you actually get to do what you would do if you weren’t even paid. So I sometimes annoy my wife when we go on holidays by reading and calculating and it took a long time for her to realise that I wasn’t doing work, that this was actually enjoyable to me. It’s like saying to a musician ‘if you went away on holiday you’d never bring your instrument with you’, or to a painter ‘you can’t paint when you go on holiday’.

Some of your past work was on Cosmic Strings, but recently your focus has changed. What inspired the transition?

This tells you another thing which makes science important. You have to understand the amount of time that my PhD student and I invested in this, and then found that nature didn’t give a damn - we were wrong. Or at least if they do play a role [in the evolution of the universe] they don’t play a role at anything like the level we anticipated. So serendipity, creativity [are important], but what makes science science, what makes it valuable, is that you have to have it testable, and it doesn’t matter how pretty your theory is, nature is the final arbiter – If it’s wrong it’s wrong. And that’s when you’ve got to be willing to go okay, we’ve gotta move on. And sometimes that can be very hard, sometimes you want to hold on. And you know, sometimes if you’re lucky or bright (and we weren’t either lucky or bright enough) then



that wrong idea can morph into something that gives you a deeper insight and that can lead to amazing discoveries. But in our case it didn’t.

One of the main goal of theoretical physics is the search for a Theory of Everything. Do you think that a singular theory will ever be derived?

Well, you know, this gets into a philosophical debate. Personally I’m not fussed if there’s no theory of everything. After all, if there’s a theory of everything there’ll be physicists out of a job, won’t there? The search for a Theory of Everything on one level is misguided, and on one level it’s a misnomer; it’s not a theory of everything it’s a theory of the fundamental forces: gravity, electricity & magnetism, the weak nuclear force and the strong nuclear force. Okay, they’re the forces that govern the universe. Govern atoms, govern molecules, govern nuclear decay, govern binding of the galaxies and so forth. So in a sense, knowing the origin and the unification of those forces does explain a lot ... but it’s still hard to jump from that to, say, a complex biological system. So emergent phenomena and complexity – yes on a fundamental level it’s built into the equations – but there are aspects of this that emerge that are not anticipated by just looking at the fundamental equations. So the search for a fundamental unification is really a search at one level to unify just the forces. But that doesn’t mean to say that as soon as you’ve done that, all of science is laid bare. It’s not.

PATENTLY ABSURD

Jake Spicer

An American jury recently announced that Samsung owes Apple over a billion dollars. This began in 2011, with Apple litigating patent infringement suits against Samsung, culminating in over 50 concurrent lawsuits around the world in July of this year.

The court case centred largely on trade dress - that is, the look and feel of products. Apple successfully accused Samsung of illegally copying design elements; however most of the damages awarded to Apple come from patent infringement. This included specific design implementation details in the Apple Operating System (iOS) like Bounce Back, the way your iPhone bounces back when you scroll to the end of a menu.

It is widely agreed within tech circles that the patent system is broken. Apple and Samsung's dispute is one of many, and an example of the growing problems in the patenting of software and the pitfalls of the current system. The atmosphere of fear, hostility and anti-competition caused by these disputes is leading to a lack of innovation and is slowing the development of new and improved technologies.

In April, Facebook bought 650 patents from Microsoft for \$550,000. Microsoft has, in turn, bought 925 patents from AOL, an American company focused on developing and investing in brands and websites. You could be excused for wondering what

Image: Edward Xu



Facebook wants with all this intellectual property. To improve the user experience for millions of people? To make an Android app that isn't completely shit? Well, maybe, but it's more than likely that their buying spree was based on a desire to stock up their patent 'arsenal' due to the then increasing legal tension between them and Yahoo.

Patents are not protecting Intellectual Property; they're being used defensively and offensively as weapons against other tech companies and their armies of lawyers. But often in cases such as Samsung v Apple, patents don't hold up. Prior art is revealed, or it is decided that the invention is too "obvious". So what's the point in issuing patents if they aren't going to hold up in court?

Patents are essentially an exchange between the inventor and the public, and are designed to promote progress and innovation. By applying for a patent, inventors are showing the public what they have invented, the "best mode" of building this invention, and providing enough detail that "anyone with ordinary skill in the art" can build it. However, this doesn't mean that only the inventor can use it. They have the option to license out their method if they so choose. In Australia, if a patent has not been used after a period of three years, anyone may request a compulsory license from the government. This stops people from patenting a method and preventing it from ever being used. Patents in the US expire between 17 and 20 years after registration, from which point they are released to the public for free use.

The current form of patents is, however, not applicable to the software industry, fuelling disputes between big software companies. There is currently no difference between a patent for pens which work in the absence of gravity (Thanks NASA!) and one which documents the technique for watching a video on a phone whilst texting (Samsung own this patent). Clearly this is illogical.

Australian software developer Anthony Berglas explains, "Software is about building systems, not individual pieces. There are vast numbers of pieces in a software system, and there is a large amount of reinvention. Most ideas are relatively simple, and can be

reinvented with a relatively small amount of effort.

"For this reason, patents tend to protect questions rather than answers. Patenters think about what problems we might need to solve in ten years time. Then, ten years later, other people solve these problems easily and independently, only to find that someone else had a patent on it. This in no way improves innovation."

This caveat has seen the birth of companies not-so-fondly referred to as Patent Trolls. In July 2011 it was discovered by National Public Radio that while the company Intellectual Ventures claimed to create innovation and intellectual property through their in-house inventors, they made the majority of their income from lawsuits and licensing already-existing inventions. IV has received over \$5 billion in funding from various tech companies including Microsoft, Intel, Sony, Nokia, Apple, Google and eBay in exchange for royalty-free licensing of its patent portfolio. In what venture capitalist Chris Sacca described as a "mafia style shakedown", IV offers protection from patent lawsuits in return for funding.

Earlier this year, the Australian Senate passed the Intellectual Property Laws Amendment (Raising the Bar) Bill 2011. While significant changes were made to the Patents Act of 1990, there were no specific changes regarding software patents. Nevertheless, there are some movements gaining traction in Australia. The Australian Pirate Party advocates reduced terms for software patents, and has argued in the past that software ought to be left out of the patent system altogether. If this happens, they claim that Australia would become a "safe haven from the patent storm", driving software innovation within Australia.

Multi-billion dollar patent auctions, the quelling of tech start-ups through lawsuits from shady businesses, and the spending of millions on patent wars between tech giants such as Samsung v Apple are now common place. Many people believe that the patent system is irreversibly flawed, a relic of a different age, and should be scrapped. The solution, however, needs to be more nuanced. Reform to the patenting system is needed, but until such time as it arrives the loser is ultimately us.

KICKSTARTING SUCCESS ON THE INTERNET

Andrew Day

"That's one small step for Man, one giant leap for Mankind." No doubt when recounting the history of our species, lack of inclusion of this life changing event would be negligent. For many, the moon landing was a deeply personal affair; countless people still remember where they were when they first saw images of man taking steps on another orb. One thing that is less remembered, however, is how much this achievement cost. Some \$23 billion is the answer. A large sum you might say, but many of the life changing moments and devices we've created have been quite expensive. The London Olympics cost somewhere around £11 billion. The Sydney Opera House cost \$102 million and a single set piece in *2001: A Space Odyssey* cost \$750,000. Everything costs money.

Money then, seems to be not only the bane of my life, but the bane of creative and scientific projects alike. Whilst some companies are wealthy or well-resourced enough to fund ambitious programs, many others are forced to seek out government grants or private funding, often with mixed results. Outcomes aren't always disastrous, but relying on external funding can lead to unwanted intervention, or the total collapse of projects when funding agreements go wrong, often leaving a nasty hangover in the form of a large debt. But even these options are becoming less feasible with the financial crisis and increasingly intense budgeting. This leads to the question: How else can projects be funded?

Enter the crowdfunding phenomenon. Crowdfunding is a method of fundraising that outsources the task of donating money. Under this method, anybody is able to donate money to projects. Due to its reach, the internet is the ideal place for something like crowdfunding. Sites such as Kickstarter and Pozible are proving the success of the venture, having exploded onto the internet in incredible fashion and quickly gathered enormous amounts of traffic.

Kickstarter and Pozible bring social networking and entrepreneurship together in a very interesting way. Both sites provide a highly visible, easy to

navigate funding platform for projects, whether they be creative or scientific.

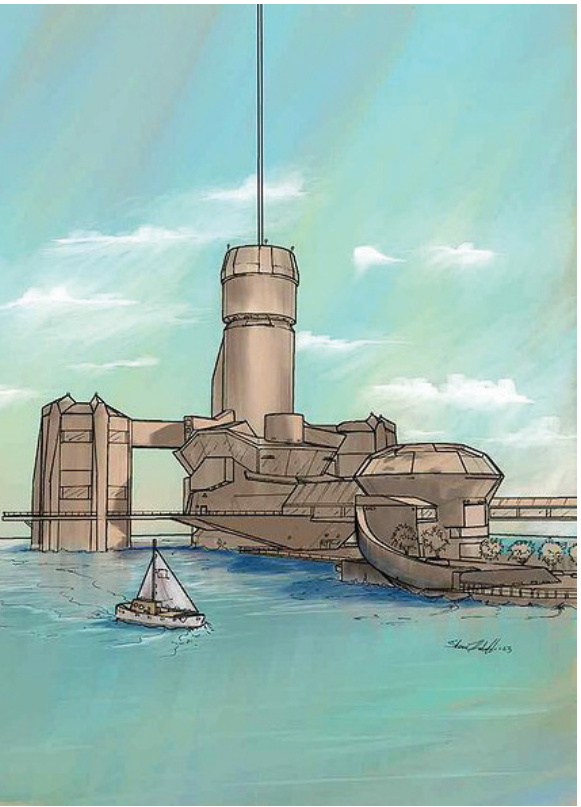
There is no discrimination based on type of project, although the word 'project' does require some definition. Kickstarter and Pozible aren't avenues to get charity funds off the ground, or a way to beg strangers for money to help get you through University (I've tried that already). They are funding platforms for things that can be *completed*. Albums, theatres, clothing accessories, Android apps, video games, films, funky artwork; it's all good. Someone presents their idea to the world, states how much money they would need to bring their idea to fruition, sets a deadline and perhaps offers people a little token of gratitude for larger donations – hopefully a fan-base is built and energised, and developers can watch money roll in. Should the target not be reached, none of the accumulated pledges are transacted and the project simply dies. Many take their failures to 'the Kickback Machine', a site that lists project failures from Kickstarter in the hope others will learn from past mistakes when putting their own ideas up for scrutiny. Even if a project does fail, there is nothing stopping someone from trying again.

Sites such as Kickstarter and Pozible have proven to be a surprisingly effective and egalitarian market mechanism, with over 60% of projects reaching their funding targets. Granted, the sites do take a commission for the space provided, which may smack to some as being far from egalitarian. However, a few things must be taken into consideration. Firstly, these crowdfunding sites are how their creators and staff make money; they have to generate a profit or they couldn't exist. Secondly, what they offer is incredible – developers are given control of an ad-free space to elaborate on their projects, and ask the entire internet community to open up their wallets and give money to an idea. Finally, this commission is a percentage of what is raised, and only exacted should projects meet their funding targets; developers aren't going to be slapped with a \$500 commission fee if their project target was only \$800. It's as egalitarian as neoliberalism gets.

There was a *Top Gear* story by James May a few years ago that detailed the depressing life of NASA's modern lunar rover. This craft was fully functional and a piece of technological brilliance, but cuts to the space program meant that it was doomed to stay earth-bound. This story actually left me saddened for a number of years, until I learnt of a similar project gaining traction on Kickstarter. At the same time that NASA's rover was defeated by budget cuts, plans by a developer called LiftPort to build a functioning space elevator were crushed for the same reason. LiftPort put this project up on Kickstarter and have to date (03/09/2012) received \$55,281 in donations, 691% more than what they needed for their initial plans.

So where do the dreamers and the mad men with an idea go in the 21st century? To the Internet of course - and eventually, to the stars.

A concept drawing of a Space Elevator anchor, one of the ambitious projects attempting to source funding through Kickstarter. Image: Liftport.



MSA OFFICE BEARER REPORTS



President: Esther Hood

Over the last few weeks much of my time has been dedicated to working with the Wholefoods Collective to create a new structure for Wholefoods that allows them to be the governing body of the space. The MSA has committed to working with the Collective in good faith, and has assured the Collective that we will do everything to help them independently incorporate. We are funding their own independent lawyer, helping to secure a lease agreement with the University, and will provide them with startup funding. Hopefully under this new structure the issues of the past will be resolved, and we will Wholefoods remain viable well into the future. If you want to find out more, come and see me in my office, or email me at msa.president@monash.edu



Treasurer: Olga Lisinska

I've recently been organizing MSA Member's Day – so far we have had free MSA t-shirts free keep cups, free ice-cream, free tickets to Activities night and free doughnuts available to members. Like <https://www.facebook.com/pages/MSA-Members-Day/> to stay in touch with what we offer.

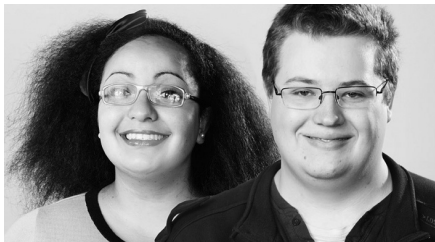
I've started working on the MSA budget pack, which will probably be going into full swing around week 10. Until then it's mostly just writing up guidelines for what people can expect with this process and telling departments they should start to think about projects for next year.

I also helped out with the Women's Department's Blue Stockings week. A big congratulations to Sally and the NTEU for organising a great week.



Secretary: Freya Logan

Hi all, since my last report I have been busy with several things. MUISS elections have been successfully completed; I aided these elections in my capacity as Deputy Returning Officer to the Returning Officer, Ben Zocco, as well as acting as a polling clerk and counting the ballot. It was really great to see so many students passionate about supporting International services. Other than my general duties of writing minutes and organising meetings, I have also attended several University committees as the student representative. We have also seen the introduction of MSA Member's Day which sees members of the MSA getting a different discount, deal or freebie once a week; in my opinion it has been a great success. Don't forget that we also hold MSA Breakfast Club on a weekly basis to provide free breakfast foods from 8am onwards in front of the cellar rooms. Hope to see you there!



Education Public Affairs: Hiba Marbfour and Liam McDonald

Since last report we have been doing the following:

Hey Byrne Let Us Learn - We have run several successful events and are continuing to collect petitions, having already collected several hundred. This campaign focuses on the quality of education at university, including issues such as class sizes, availability of textbooks, recording of lectures and the cost of academic transcripts.

MSA Week - MSA Week has been focusing on the Hey Byrne Let Us Learn campaign, with activities including MSA Tuesdays and MSA Breakfast Club.

MyUniversities - We attended the MyUniversities feedback group and provided information on the usefulness of the website.

Education Conference – We completed one-on-one catch up sessions related to NUS Education Conference.

Mental Health Campaign – We met the Welfare and Queer Officers to initiate planning a mental health campaign.

Student Representative Network – We ran a session on Incorporated Bodies, using the MSA as an example.



Education Academic Affairs: Julia Ponte and Ali Majorah

Of late, Julia has been working on a project investigating the effects of Facebook on people's social lives, school lives and overall time management. This has resulted from a slew of students coming to us with dissatisfying university results, because of Facebook being a distraction.

As part of his efforts to ensure greater accountability within the MSA, Ali moved motions at the student council meeting on 23 August calling for an open budget and greater transparency around the controversial SSAF funding negotiations.

Unfortunately, these motions were voted down, meaning the budget and the draft SSAF funding agreement are still secret documents, effectively preventing ordinary students from seeing where the MSA plans to spend their money.

As always, we encourage students to contact us with any concerns or ideas. Julia: julia.ponte@monash.edu, 9905 1122, Ali: ali.majokah@monash.edu, 0411 025 358.



Indigenous Officer: Shawn Andrews

It's great to be back from Switzerland, where I had the opportunity to

represent Indigenous Australians at a conference of change makers. I had a wonderful time and the event was life changing.

The next few months are an exciting time for the Indigenous Department. We have the Indigenous/non-Indigenous dialogue on the 11th September. This event aims to bring together people who want to heal the wounds of the past and create a unified future between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; everyone is welcome. Students for Indigenous Sovereignty (SIS), in conjunction with the MSA Indigenous Department, have been hosting a series of lectures with Indigenous elders this semester. I would like to congratulate SIS on the work they have done for these events, and thank them for all their assistance throughout the year.

I hope that all students are having a great semester, and I welcome you to come and see me if you have any questions about Indigenous culture.



Environment and Social Justice: Laura Ricciardi

Gillard's resurrection of Howard's notorious Pacific Solution represents a total disregard for the human rights of refugees. The Monash Refugee Action Collective continues to be active in the face of Labor opening more jails in Western Australia and across the south-east, with dozens of activists attending our campaign meetings held every Wednesday at 2pm in Wholefoods. We welcome new faces and urge students against the Government's racist immigration policy to attend the protest outside Maribrynong detention centre

on September 22. The ESJ department has been involved in the fight against cuts to Humanities & Social Sciences at La Trobe University, where over 60% of units will be discontinued and at least 37 staff fired. Students from Monash occupied the administration building and attended the Open Day demonstration. For more information about our campaigns, contact 0401 315 387.



Welfare: Luke Nickholds

Have you heard about the MSA Survival Centre? Life at uni can be tough - I think we've already established that - so wouldn't it be nice if there was a way to get stuff for free? Well there is! Come to the MSA Survival Centre and peruse our collection of donated goods - we've got everything from clothes to food, cutlery and even clocks. Last week there was a full bodied monkey suit. You should come and check it out - best of all, it's free!



Male Queer: Wade Aulich

Greetings beautiful people! As some of you may know August the 17th marked the launch of the Monash It Gets Better (IGB) Project. This project was an addition to the large volume of participation that the It Gets Better Project

has inspired from various organizations, corporations and institutions around the world. The Monash IGB has to date had over 10,000 views in over 74 countries; it is a very moving and open video that is available on YouTube (just search: Monash It Gets Better). I would like to also mention that a trigger warning is necessary due to the openness about particular issues (Queerphobia, self harm and suicide). I sincerely hope you all get through 'essay time' with minimal stress. That's what I'm aiming for.

Female Queer: Elisabeth Griffiths

How time has flown! I hope the semester isn't being too harsh on you all (and my commiserations if it is). The Queer Department spent most of Week 5 in the crazy haze of Queer Week, and I think the guest speakers, discussions, movie screenings and events gave people both a chance to have some fun, and a broad range of things to think about. We've still got lots of things happening for the rest of the semester. To begin, we've reinstated Queery, the fortnightly discussion group - we'll now have Queer Tea on every first and third Wednesday of the month, and on the other weeks we'll have a casual chat, facilitated by Wade or me, about something queer in the news, or something people are feeling passionate about. If you're not already receiving the Queer E-Newsletter get in touch and sign up – it's a great way to stay up to date with what's happening in the department and the wider queer community.



Activities: Bernadette de Sousa and Paul Ireland

The Activities Department ran the first ever Activities Night on the 23rd of August. Stonefield and Owl Eyes played, alongside the up and coming Monash band THNKR, to a crowd of 175 people. A great night was had by all, and the continuation of this event is something to look forward to in the future!!

We are excited to start promoting Oktoberfest, which will be held on Wednesday October 3rd! We have also started planning AXP II with the other clubs; it will be a great night to celebrate finishing the year! Just make sure you get your ticket before it sells out like it does every semester!!



Women's Department: Sally-Anne Jovic

Sally-Anne Jovic failed to submit a report for this edition of Lot's Wife.



MSA FIGHTS FOR EDUCATION AND STUDENT HOUSING

John Jordan

On-campus living is a wonderful experience for students. Often, living in halls of residence entails not only having a home to retreat to at the end of the day, but a strong sense of community and shared experience. The MSA believes in and supports quality on campus accommodation, and when the MSA heard that Monash Residential Services (MRS) could be improved for new and perspective students, they started a petition “MRS: It’s Time to Impress”. This is part of a campaign to upgrade some of the services at MRS in order to improve functionality and comfort.

The proposed changes to the existing system include: extending the bus route behind MRS (742) so that students don’t need to pay for both Zone 1 and Zone 2 fares when travelling into Melbourne CBD, offering more affordable and better quality food at MRS dining hall, providing better quality toilet paper and improved wireless access, and establishing more lighting between campus and halls for the safety of

students (in particular, female-identifying students). Student volunteers and MSA office-bearers have been seen around campus educating students about the ways that MRS could be improved and gathering signatures as capital with which to open negotiations with the University.

Additionally, the MSA, and in particular the Education (Public Affairs) Department, have been working on a campaign entitled “Hey Byrne, Let Us Learn!” This aims to enlighten students about current problems with our university education and implement solutions. Objectives include making more copies of textbooks and course readers available for loan in the library, mandatory uploading of course readers to Moodle or Blackboard, compulsory recording of lectures (i.e., not entirely compulsory in Law and Engineering), smaller class sizes (e.g., Arts tutorials), and cheaper academic transcripts, especially when more than one is required (e.g., applying for internships).

Problems also exist in regards to disparities in

educational quality, funding and administration in between faculties and courses (e.g. Gender Studies vs. Psychology funding). Information obtained from talking to students during the course of the campaign will be used to highlight to the University that these educational inequalities do exist, and that specific courses and educational amenities need to be rethought, reorganised and refunded.

This campaign involves multiple BBQs, campaign stalls, and petitioning events including a cosplay of Monash University Vice-Chancellor Ed Byrne. Gathered signatures will be presented to the University, in particular the Vice Chancellor.

The MSA hopes, through both of these campaigns, to achieve changes that will ensure that Monash remains a functional, inclusive, and student-centred institution. If you want to be involved in any of these campaigns, or want to run a campaign with the MSA, email MSA President Esther Hood at esther.hood@monash.edu.

WHOLEFOODS MEDIATION SLOWLY YEILDING RESULTS

The Wholefoods Collective and the MSA Executive are currently involved in ongoing negotiations to secure the future of Wholefoods and reconcile the dispute between the two parties, as reported on in the last edition of Lot’s Wife. During recent mediation sessions, facilitated by an independent mediator contracted by the MSA, the MSA Executive put forward a proposal that Wholefoods be incorporated and removed from the MSA Constitution. It was originally suggested that these changes be taken to a referendum at the MSA Elections, contingent on the Executive and the Collective agreeing on details at a later date.

The Wholefoods Collective subsequently argued that the time frame for these changes was too short

to allow for sufficient planning and research. They maintain that details of any agreement should be decided before a referendum in order for the student body to make an informed decision about whether or not to support an incorporation process. As such, the referendum question has been postponed. Collective is also concerned about ensuring the viability of Wholefoods if it does incorporate, arguing that insufficient legal and financial planning, as well as an as yet unknown rental amount charged by the University, could compromise the future of the enterprise.

Negotiations with the MSA are continuing in the interim. The Executive is considering the idea of bringing back a Volunteers Coordinator and volunteers, which the Collective supports, providing

that the model is based on the previous system that offered a meal per 1hr volunteered and is coordinated by a student appointed by Collective. The Executive has also agreed to redirect approximately \$250,000 of funding, originally set aside for refurbishing the restaurant space, to a different project. MSA President Esther Hood has also assured Collective that she would approach the University to have recently installed security cameras removed.

Both parties have appreciated the opportunity to discuss the governance issues surrounding Wholefoods, but despite Collective members’ earlier optimism and the Executive’s positive take on the mediation sessions, many serious concerns persist and issues remain unaddressed.

MSA ELECTIONS: NOT JUST A TIME TO AVOID THE CAMPUS CENTRE

Shawn Andrews

The annual Monash Student Association (MSA) Elections are upon us. This process allows for the election of student representatives who will spend 2013 working to provide services for you, and negotiating with the university on your behalf. In spite of the role the MSA plays, many students are ignorant of it, and treat elections as a time to give the Campus Centre as wide a berth as possible. Whilst I believe that voting in the elections is extremely important, I understand the reasons why people may be disenchanted with and disengaged from this process.

I often question what we are really voting for in student elections. In my opinion, the ideal person to represent students should be an outstanding individual with a strong character, the ability to communicate across many audiences, and above all an ability to engage students in University life. Despite it being crucial to academic success, study is not the only, nor the most important, aspect of university life. Social interaction and inclusion should be at the heart of any university experience; students should be able to interact with other students and feel safe to explore their own personalities.

Without opportunity for social interaction, university becomes a set of lecture theatres where you turn up to class and then go home. This is a sad way to experience university life, and something that the MSA should be actively opposing through creation of social more opportunities. If we elect representatives who don’t understand this concept and aren’t advocates for openness and student engagement, we are actively shredding the social fabric that makes university such a special place.

University is a unique experience and one that students should cherish. I want everyone who has attended Monash University to have left this place with not only a degree but also a sense of pride that they have belonged.

I want to be able to tell my kids about the great time I had at university, and recommend that they choose Monash when it comes to entering tertiary

education. It is because of this desire that I would ask the student body to think carefully about who you vote for in the elections. Take the time to investigate who is running, and for which positions. Look into the role of each MSA Department, and ask questions about whether that department is doing enough. It is only when we actively engage and question the role of the MSA that we can exert some effect on it, and its extended impact on university life.

In addition to problems I have with current levels of student engagement with the MSA, I find the election process hugely problematic. The election process currently used in the annual Monash Student Association (MSA) Elections is a joke. To begin with, it is possible to register a ticket under almost any name. On the surface this sounds like a great concept; I could name a ticket in such a way that it is clearly linked a set of solid values, policies and political aims which I represent. It can be reasonably expected that this would give voters a clear indication of who I am and what I stand for. However, this naming regulation also allows for the potential deception of voters. Tickets can be named in a misleading manner to attract the vote of the average student who doesn’t know much about the MSA, and can’t distinguish between tickets that are legitimate and those that are not.

I could name my ticket “One Thousand Dollars for Every Student” and prey on students who don’t understand that this ticket is only a name and doesn’t actually represent my party and its values, policies or political aspirations. I hope that students are able to distinguish between ticket names that are serious versus those that are a joke, but this is likely not always the case. That a clause allowing for the registration of misleading tickets exists negates the respectability of our elections; this needs to be restructured.

Many people involved in the MSA believe that running tickets and political campaigns is the only way to elect student representatives; often the rationale is that this is the way things have always



The 2012 Election Guide is now available. Find a copy in the newsstands on campus, or visit www.lotswife.com.au

been done, and always will be done. A little research, however, shows that these beliefs are not fully founded, as not all Student Unions (Associations) operate in this manner. The University of Sydney Student Union has a board of directors who are employed for a two year term; each year five of these positions are renewed, and the Executive of the board is elected by the board members. This is a great concept as it means that representatives are accountable for two years, and they are voted into the board individually and without a ticket.

I don’t attend the University of Sydney so I can’t say that their system is perfect, or that they do a better job of engaging students than we do here at Monash. What is clear is that there are other systems, which we could benefit from investigating.

During election week, ask questions about the election process and scrutinise the parties; ask them what they stand for. Probe the people who hand you a ticket and ask you to vote for them; consider their answers and then ask representatives from other tickets the same thing. Not all students are enrolled in the same units or even on the same campus, but we are all students of Monash University, and the decisions we make now will affect our university experience, and the legacy we leave for future students.

PARIS HOLDS THE KEY TO MY HEART

Olivia Tolich

Watching *Midnight in Paris*, it became extremely clear to me that this film is based on my life and my experiences in the City of Lights. Good times spending my days shopping along the Champs-Elysees and my nights traversing the space-time continuum to the 1920s. Or as I like to call it, getting drunk beyond comprehension.

Stepping into the grand Peninsula@Docklands was more like stepping into *Moulin Rouge* than *Midnight in Paris*. With muted red lighting, Eiffel Tower and red mill centerpieces, and large cabaret posters dotting the spacious room, I definitely felt as if I had stolen a TARDIS or time-turner for my night out.

As a third year, I have attended my fair share of faculty run balls, parties and events. Based on experience, I can say with total confidence that the Monash Law Students Society (LSS) never fails to put together an amazing function. So what goes into making such an enormous event go off without a hitch?

Step 1: The décor. Normally, I hate themes. I find costumes to be an unpleasant inconvenience as I inevitably resemble a walking primary school art project rather than whatever I'm dressed up as. However, as previously mentioned, the immaculate room and the explosion of formalwear created the perfect mood.

Step 2: The food. What amazed me about the food was the attention to detail. It was straight out of a little bistro along the Seine - steak frites and chicken with mushroom risotto. La Pièce de Résistance was naturally the dessert, a perfect lemon tart. As much as I normally avoid food at these events (there was a bad experience with an enormous whole soggy green chili at a ball whose faculty shall remain nameless), I was quite happy to make my dress feel a bit tighter for this menu.

Step 3: The booze. There is nothing worse than a ball where getting a drink is more difficult than

getting the lollies off the top shelf at the supermarket. Thankfully, with two well-stocked bars at either end of the hall, I certainly didn't dehydrate.

Step 4: The music. Aside from a couple of awkward repeats that left the entire floor confused and abandoned, you can't go wrong with classics like *Call Me Maybe*.

Step 5: PHOTOBOOTH! Enough said. I want one in my house.

Monash LSS ticked all these boxes tenfold. Hobbling home from the after party, heels in hand, I pondered the idea of university balls. Whilst I can't really go back in time to the days of masquerades, debutante balls and Jane Austen dances, I love that these faculties give me the chance to get all fancy and dance till I die.

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS: UNDERSTAND YOUR WORKPLACE RIGHTS

Amy Tanner

The Employment and Careers Development (ECD) Centre at Monash recently hosted a seminar on what to look for in employment contracts. The general requirements of an employment contract are well known: personal details, position, whether the position is full or part time, period of employment, salary and superannuation. For most students these are easy to navigate, and they will have already encountered them in part time jobs.

Employment contracts occasionally also feature special conditions of which students should be aware. For example, Monash University has an immigration clause in their employment contracts. Potential employees who do not have Australian citizenship must obtain and maintain an appropriate visa from the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). In order for the University to be able to verify visa details, a representative must be

given consent to access records held in DIAC's Visa Entitlement Verification On-line (VEVO) system.

Terms and conditions of employment contracts should always be carefully read over by potential employees, and ECD recommends that people should ask questions if they require clarification on any clauses – employees may be intimidated by employers when negotiating a contract, and it is important that they understand the contract as it can also be used to protect them should a dispute with an employer arise.

Types of contracts can be varied. It is suggested that employees should always request a written contract signed by both them and their employer. Whilst verbal contracts can be legally binding, they can be difficult to prove. Letters of engagement are also counted as contracts, as are secondments for a temporary transfer to a different job within the same organization.

Complexity is added by a growing trend of

graduates being recruited as independent contractors or agents, rather than as employees. Independent contractors should be wary that their contractual responsibilities might be different to traditional employee ones, and more costly. Independent contractors may have to organize their own tax, and are not always compensated for holiday or sick leave. Superannuation is not guaranteed, and individuals should be careful to save money for retirement. Furthermore, work expenses such as phone bills and advertising may have to be self-funded.

If employees or independent contractors do have problems in their work place, it is recommended that they contact the relevant union, who can provide legal advice and further specialist services to members. Further help can be sought from the Australian Fair Work Ombudsman and JobWatch, a Victorian Community Legal Centre specialising in employment law.



THE DANGERS OF THE 'CRUSH'

Anika Baset



The glorious highs and devastating lows of love are well documented in music, literature and the Facebook statuses of the emotionally volatile. In contrast, love's younger brother the Crush is often cast aside and trivialized. Despite being the neglected sibling of the family, the crush can be a sly bastard indeed. He may act as though he's nonchalant and unimportant, but this guy has the power to mess with your mind. I've discovered this first hand. While I'm terrific at being a foxy, Single Lady (Put A Ring On It) and excellent at the hand hold-y couple thing, crushes make me lose. my. shit. When I have a crush on someone, the reasonable, level headed me pisses off and is replaced with a performing circus monkey.

I've made excuses for the bizarre behaviour that occurs when I like someone. One time in high school, I literally crawled out of class to meet up with my crush. I put this down to general teenage

idiocy. Another time, I convinced my friend and her extended family to help me sing classic Backstreet Boys songs to serenade a boy. I put this one down to my love of the Von Trapp family singers. After my most recent exhibit of crazy though, I could no longer deny that I have a problem. I was having coffee with a friend when Facebook was kind enough to tell me 'Crush' had contacted me but cruel enough to not let it load. "Anika, I think you're being a little bit obsessive ..." said my friend, as I furiously tried to get shitty Monash wireless to work. "I'm not obsessive... STUPID PIECE OF SHIT PHONE WHY YOU NO LOAD STUPID FACEBOOK STUPIDSTUPIDSTUPID!!!" When I chucked my phone across Taste Baguette, hitting an unassuming waiter in the head*, it was clear that 'me having a crush on someone' and 'not being bat-shit mental' are mutually exclusive.

I've done some thinking as to why crushes have this effect. It comes down to the fact when we have a crush on someone, we generally don't know them all that well. If you know another person inside out (their penchant for eating their toenails included) and still think they're the bee's knees, chances are you're genuinely in love with them. Crushes, on the other hand, are almost entirely based on images created in our heads. First, consider how they present themselves to the world, note their striking personality traits and do some general 'research' (read: extensive Facebook stalking). Match this information to your own particular wants and voila! An imperfect human being has been moulded into 'The Best Person Ever'.

And when you're 'The Best Person Ever', can you blame me for losing my shit over you?

**No waiters were harmed in the making of this column.*

STUDENT HEALTH

Cat Poiani-Cordella

It seems that we are constantly bombarded with messages about foods we can't eat or conversely foods that we think are healthy for us but are actually detrimental to our health. This edition I'm going to debunk some food myths and bring some seemingly unhealthy foods back onto your plate.

Red Meat

Red meat is often valued for its high protein content however many cheap cuts are high in fat, cancelling the health benefits provided. Kangaroo is the leanest red meat available, containing high levels of protein, iron and virtually no fat. Many people may cringe at the thought of eating an Australian icon but cheap cuts can in fact often be found at wholesalers.

Peanut Butter

Although peanut butter is high in fat it is a healthy

spread in moderation. For every 10g of spread, 9g is constituted of monounsaturated fat (often described as good fats necessary for organ cushioning, joint lubrication and body insulation) and 1g of saturated fat (commonly referred to as bad fat, found in McDonalds and KFC).

Carbohydrates

A lot of people think that reducing carbs is the first thing they must do in order to lose weight, going protein crazy instead. This is probably due to the success of the Dukan diet. However, carbohydrates are our body's first point of call for energy. Excess carbohydrate is stored as glycogen in the liver and muscles. Whilst exercising, your body attains glycogen from different body storages. Eating carbohydrates low in glycaemic index (GI) such as wholemeal breads & pastas, couscous and quinoa enables blood glucose to

remain relatively stable, ensuring that your body does not start seeking foods high in sugar.

Chocolate

Cocoa is high in antioxidants and has been shown to act as an anti-inflammatory. However, we often consume milk chocolate which is laden with excess fat, sugar, nuts and nought (if you're anything like me!). A good tip is to melt some 75% dark chocolate (85% is really nice) and mix in almonds and sultanas. Then place small spoon fulls onto a piece of baking paper and place it in the fridge to set... mmmm. At the end of the day, you should enjoy what you eat. We are often so busy during the week that we eat on the run, in our car or in front of the computer. Next weekend, take some time to prepare something beautiful and enjoy it in the company of friends and family



People often ask me what the various avenues for sex work are, and why I chose the one that I did. This edition I have outlined the four most common options for sex work in Victoria, and their pros and cons. It is important to keep in mind that prostitution falls under state law, meaning that regulations vary throughout the country.

Street

Despite regulated sex work being legal in some parts of Australia, many people still choose to work on the street for one reason or another. Often people engage in this based on knowing someone familiar with the scene. It is common knowledge that there are different spots to pick up Johns whether you're a woman, a transwoman, a guy, or a cross-dressing guy. There's an element of danger in all prostitution, but there's less feeling of legitimacy on the street to keep clients in line. This means that they may demand unsafe sex (it's one of the reasons clients pick up street workers), and if something goes wrong calling the police is an unappealing option because street workers risk being held legally liable for soliciting. As such, street work is the most dangerous form of prostitution, and there is little support if workers find themselves in a dangerous position. Many people choose to work on the street because they are able to keep 100% of their earnings, and they don't have to navigate bureaucratic processes. Those who work on the street you need to take all steps possible to protect their safety; the RhED website has a number of useful resources.

Parlour

I work at a parlour, so have a sound knowledge of how the system operates. Getting a job at a parlour is easy; potential employees just have to rock up.

Standards do, however, vary. The quality of a parlour makes a huge difference to how safe employees feel at work, and how much they enjoy their job. There are many great aspects of working in a parlour; clients come to the parlour, workers operate in a familiar environment and there are always plentiful safe sex supplies. Probably the best part of working in a parlour, however, is the safety aspect. I know that if at any point I'm with a client and I feel unsafe, I can scream and half a dozen angry transwomen in stiletto heels will come running. On the other hand, managers can make life hell if workers get on their bad side. Furthermore, workers have to wait around for the customers to choose them; this can mean sitting in the parlour all night doing dozen of intros and going home without having had a booking. The house also takes a cut of all earnings.

Escort Agency

Working with an escort agency is similar to working at a parlour in many ways. A manager handles advertising and the organisation of bookings; workers just have to show up. The main advantage is that workers don't have to leave home unless they have a booking; the agency will ring them when they've found a client. For an escort agency, there's no intro – clients generally see a worker's ad on the agency's website, or hear them described by the agency, and book based on that. Working for an agency is, however, not as safe as working in a parlour. Agencies are always aware of where workers are, and workers are required to make a safety call in front of clients when they first arrive, but there is no immediate help on hand if something goes wrong. Agencies take a percentage of earnings in the same manner as parlours.

Private Escort

In Victoria, it is possible for sex workers to work by themselves, or with one other person, as private escorts. For this to be legal, workers need to register an ABN with the Business Licensing Authority. As part of this process, names and details are permanently placed on a government registry, although workers can request to be de-identified once they have left the industry. As with any business, workers are responsible for things like GST, complying with legislation and organising income tax. Working as a private escort can be a great way to earn money, but workers are also responsible for transport costs, safe sex supplies, advertising costs and more. They do, however, get to keep 100% of their earnings, and have the added benefit of being able to organise their clients from home. Safety concerns are similar to those faced by escort agency workers, yet if private escorts get a creepy vibe from a client they can cancel without fear of retribution from a manager. For male sex workers, being a private escort is the predominant means of success in the industry; there isn't a large enough market to sustain male brothel workers in Melbourne.

As you can see, there are a number of avenues for sex work, each with their own upsides and downsides. For most workers the choice is really a matter of personal preference; none of them is 'the best option'. And this is not an exhaustive list, it really only covers full-service prostitution. Other forms of sex work include 'special massage' or phone sex operators, in addition to adult entertainment services such as pornography. The sex industry is bigger and more diverse than most people first think.

Alexandra, A Monash Student.

INTERNET DATING FOR 20-SOMETHINGS: WEIRD OR WONDERFUL?

Louise Mapleston

Up until this morning I always thought internet dating was a part of an exclusive grownup club; kind of like having a mortgage, owning business cards or being divorced. Both my parents (who have mortgages, business cards and are divorced) are well established in the online dating sphere and many of my friends' parents are regular RSVPers and like to cast a line out on *About Fish*, in hope that another middle aged divorcee will take a nibble at their middle class bait.

As I said, I thought this was the case, until a gorgeous, intelligent and extremely eligible friend of mine told me that she had signed up to internet dating. My mind was blown - where have all of the smart, socially minded, artistic men disappeared to in the world that my extremely eligible friend cannot find a date through regular social interaction? If my slim and dynamic friend cannot find a man what hope do the rest of us have?

My friend's new found hobby, or should I say, interest, got me thinking - is internet dating really that bad? Do you have to be desperate/divorced/weird to do it?

Maybe internet dating for young 20-somethings isn't a last resort for the wounded, as my mum would say. Maybe it is the next big thing; an avenue for young people to find other young people who are ready for a committed relationship, or are at least open to the idea of intimacy rather than the 'pash -and-dash' culture which I and many friends are consumed by. My friend said she signed up for the service because her friendship group lacks eligible heterosexual men and she wanted to open doors that would facilitate meeting young men that aren't in her immediate or secondary friendship circles. I couldn't think of a better or more valid reason to join the internet dating bandwagon.

From a sociological perspective, the largest barrier for many of my friends under the age of 50 to joining

an internet dating site is stigma- am I really 20 years old and unable to find a date? How weird am I?

Erving Goffman, a sociological theorist, defines stigma as " ...an attribute, behavior, or reputation which is socially discrediting in a particular way: it causes an individual to be mentally classified by others in an undesirable, rejected stereotype rather than in an accepted, normal one," or in the context of internet dating " a special kind of gap between *virtual social identity* and *actual social identity*."

We worry that the people who are attracted to internet dating go there because their original identity is not accepted by society, and they need to take refuge in a place where they can create another more accepted virtual identity- an identity that can be carefully crafted through means of edited photos and a list of fake hobbies. So then we fear that we're left with sleazes, creeps and the socially inept as our only options for internet dates. No wonder internet dating gets a bad rap.

But what if internet dating was the norm? I mean, we spend hours and hours a day socialising through means of Facebook, Twitter and various chat programs; sometimes more than face-to-face interaction-.why is it so bad that my friend wants to open up her dating options through the same web based medium? In fact, it makes sense.

My friend is not socially

inept; she has more hobbies than I have pairs of underwear (and that's a lot), nor does she talk too much or too little. She is a perfectly normal, lovely young woman setting an extremely high calibre for internet dating. Maybe we should all sign up, because if there is a male version of my friend online, I sure as hell would love to meet him.

Image: Mamjodh



SUITS

Thomas Alomes

“Like every good man, I strive for perfection, and, like every ordinary man, I have found that perfection is out of reach - but not the perfect suit.” Edward Tivnan

If you think back on many of the important events in your life, there is often one unifying thread – Suits. Whether for occasions of great joy or events we’d rather forget, from weddings, birthday parties and important business deals to funerals and court appearances, suits are the predominant choice of attire. A suit is a mark of respect, but also used by many as a symbol of power.

The basic construction of a ‘suit’, in the sense discussed here, is at minimum a formal jacket and matching set of trousers. This is generally complimented by a shirt and tie combo. A suit can be double-breasted, pin striped, three pieced or a full-blown tuxedo. The dominance of the suit is clearly expressed at all levels of our society, from high art to pop culture. The very dapper Harvey Specter, lead character in the aptly titled television series ‘Suits’, perfectly embodies the values we associate with suits – wealth, power and prestige. Harvey is the quintessential ‘boss’. He’s a high-powered commercial lawyer introduced as “the best closer in Manhattan” who rocks extremely expensive tailored three-piece suits. When challenged by his young associate as to why he spends so much focus and money on his attire, Specter replies “people respond to how you dress, so like it or not this is what you have to do.”

Bret Easton Ellis’ novel American Psycho (remade into a film starring Christian Bale – the man obviously likes his suits) serves as another prime example of the power and privilege attributed to suits. The novel centres on the psychotic Wall Street investment banker Patrick Bateman. Driven by greed and bloodlust, he goes unchecked on a murderous rampage through the streets of Manhattan. Bateman utilises his Armani suits as a part of the ‘mask of sanity’ that he projects onto the outside world to cover his sadistic and homicidal tendencies. In his own words, “there is an idea of a Patrick Bateman. Some kind of abstraction. But there is no real me. Only an entity. Something illusory.” He successfully conceals the

monster that lies within by creating a suited shell that is accepted by society.

In accordance with the transmutation of the humble suit from a formal outfit to the representation of a certain identity, the term ‘suit’ is now used to describe the faceless corporate drone. To become a ‘suit’ is to shirk one’s individuality and assume the role of a cog in the ruthless and unaccountable machinations of modern business. Magritte’s ‘Son of Man’ is an expression of this rendered in paint and canvas. Magritte saw the suit as a mask that his inner self was able to retreat behind when forced to appear in everyday society.

Even super heroes have to wear suits to be successful. Bruce Wayne sports skin-tight black Batman gear when he needs to transform into Gotham’s Dark Knight. But to assume his day job of billionaire playboy he requires sharply cut pinstripe suits.

It should be noted that this phenomenon does

not just apply to men. Women in high profile positions also frequently wear suits, suggesting that this form of clothing is deliberately adopted to gain a competitive edge. Think to women in roles of power such as Hillary Clinton, Julia Gillard and Gail Kelly (Westpac CEO) – all are strong proponents of the pantsuit. Whether these women’s wearing of a pantsuit is a free choice or a coerced change – that is to say something they feel is necessary in order to be taken seriously in male dominated arenas - is an important question. A woman’s attire does not affect her ability to lead or her intelligence. Regardless, we perceive these women as powerful and in control (just as with men) in part because of the suits they wear.

But as our old mate Newton said, every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Out of this ideal of the suit as representing wealth and power a counter-culture has sprung forth. It is widely said that we are living in the information technology age, and many of the dotcom and social media success stories of the last decade have had their humble beginnings in college dorm rooms. So when the companies have been skyrocketed from students’ basements to the boardroom, the fashion choices of those involved haven’t necessarily followed suit.

Steve Jobs’ black skivvy, jeans and runners combo (junnerns) is iconic. Mark Zuckerberg prefers reping hoodies and t-shirts over three piece pinstripes. Zuckerberg and other gen x and y-ers represent a new wave of successful professionals who are rewriting the rules on all levels of business, including dress code.

However, this is still just a counter culture, and the vast majority of our society still sees suits as the pinnacle of attire. If the world does become more casual in its dress sense, this will only further serve to strengthen the suits distinguished position of power and privilege in our minds. So to leave you with the words of Barney Stinson: “Suit Up!”

Image: Son of Man by Magritte



A MAN, A PLAN, A VAN, BURGERS

Jordane Hyams

Mr Whippy is rarely around today. Unlike the days when he could frequently be heard driving down suburban streets, he now only occasionally pops up. He may appear at St Kilda beach from time to time, or sit in the car park at Brighton beach waiting for children desperately seeking salmonella. His truck is worn, off white, with pictures of the ice creams peeling off from too many years of sun exposure like that English woman who was on *60 Minutes* because she was obsessed with tanning.

And that’s because deep down inside, Mr Whippy knows that he can no longer compete. He is not the king of the meals-on-wheels business anymore. His throne has been usurped by a new wave of pop-up food vans that have hit Melbourne over the past year. Through the use of Twitter and Facebook (our social media friends at their best once again), anyone can now like, locate and be fed by the new cool in fast food. Vans such as Beatbox Kitchen, Taco Truck, Gumbo Kitchen and Dhaba Curry are hitting the streets with a flair of gourmet flavour faster than you can get your take-away at Maccas.

Developed about a year ago, the vans update their locations daily via tweets or Facebook posts and then

are inundated with hungry customers after they set up their grills. Trading strictly out of vehicles, the food is fresh and good quality. We’re not talking your average fast food outlet here; with Beatbox Kitchen frequently touted as having the best burgers in Melbourne, it’s Grab ‘n’ Go Gourmet.

Beatbox Kitchen and Taco Truck are probably the best known names of the ‘eat your food out of a truck’ trend. Both are owned by Raph Rashid, whose attention to detail is clearly evident in the menu of both vans. Beatbox Kitchen offers beef burgers for the meat eaters and ‘shroom’ burgers for the vegetarians (think a big marinated portabello mushroom instead of a beef patty) among other delights. Taco Truck offers its own delectables in an ingenious mixture of textures and flavours such as poppyseed mayo, along with fish tacos freshly crumbed in the van. The vans are easily recognizable too. Beatbox Kitchen? It looks like a Beatbox. Now if *that’s* not cool, then I don’t know what is.

Gumbo Kitchen and Dhaba Curry, both also about a year old, are for slightly more adventurous palettes. Inspired by a visit to New Orleans by owners Michael Cotter and Patricia Stanton, Gumbo Kitchen brings Cajun-style food to the Melbourne masses.

That means a traditional ‘po boy’ - white bread stuffed with spiced deep fried shrimp or slow cooked beef with gravy, or both - as well as the van’s namesake, gumbo stews: lots of flavour, lots of spices, and lots of stuff in it. If Louisiana jazz doesn’t do it for you, search for one of the Dhaba Curry trucks instead. With a choice of six different curries and an extensive entree menu, Dhaba Curry has apparently taken their Kyneton restaurant and given it wheels.

The trucks hang around Brunswick, Carlton and the like; keep an eye out on their respective twitters to get exact locations. They also make regular and well-received appearances at music festivals like Falls, Meredith and Groovin’ The Moo.

The cool thing about these new age food vans is that they are pushing the envelope of what can be considered ‘fine dining’. The food van trend is turning gourmet food into something you can eat out in the open with your mates, without having to shout over a bad music loop at a restaurant or forking out a small fortune. If you’re feeling like a good feed, then check out the next stop for a van, grab a picnic rug and throw yourselves a spontaneous (and delicious) picnic lunch. And if you see Mr Whippy, maybe bring him a burger. He’s probably hungry.

YOU HAVE \$15 DOLLARS AND YOU WANT TO EAT... ASIAN?

Margaret Zoides

I’ve never been to Asia but I do know my Beef Hor Fun from my Nasi Goreng, and my Seafood Laska from my Tom Yum. If these words mean nothing to you then don’t worry! I also know where to find tasty Asian food, with no need for dodgy pronunciations or the price tag of a high-class deconstructed spring roll. The top four are as follows:

Noodle Kingdom, 469 High St, Preston

Although its location isn’t great, this is as gourmet as a student can get. Awarded 43 out of 50 by the Age, the chef makes all noodles fresh and can be seen through the front window stringing them out for your din din. Considering the rave reviews, the food is still cheap, with the Beef Hor Fun leaving

you change for a drink or an order of homemade dim sims. The line is usually out the door though, so call ahead!

Dannys and Clammys , 605 Station St, Box Hill

This is the go-to dumpling house of the eastern suburbs. A serve of 15 juicy dumplings will set you back around \$8.50 depending on your preferred filling. This leaves plenty of change for a few entrees, or even the signature Shanghai noodles for another \$8. I know that doesn’t add up to \$15 dollars but hey, why not share with a friend? Or a date?

Vietnamese Noodle Bar, 251 Swanston St, City

I’ve brought friends here a few times. There are lots of options to choose from and the place is always busy.

The colour scheme isn’t great but who cares when you’re chowing down some perfectly delicious chicken satay skewers. The dish to try here is the calamari with spicy salt for a \$10 bill. Wash it down with a homemade ice tea for \$2.50 or order some wontons for a crunchy end to the night.

Your Thai, 255 Swanston St, City

The neighbour of Vietnamese Noodle Bar, its competition that keeps these eateries cheap. While you wait for your order, try a smoothie; Mango and Strawberry (\$3.90) are my favourites! If you have never tried Pad Thai (approx. \$10), this is the place. Order up and enjoy.

STRANDED IN THE SUBURBS: A GUIDE

Rebecca Irvine

Deciding where to set up humble abode in Melbourne can be a formidable task. Do you endure humdrum suburban life for the sake of affordability and proximity? Sacrifice your square metres for an apartment in the city? Or do you brave the yuppies of the inner suburbs and snag yourself a house-like structure with carpet in the kitchen and mould on the bathroom walls but-hey-at-least-the-rent-is-cheap? This article will probably provide you with no help whatsoever in making this decision, but will hopefully be good for a laugh.

Fitzroy
The definitive hipster haven, Fitzroy has to be the suburb with the highest concentration of raw vegan food and kebabs in close proximity with one another. Just be careful that you're not run over by an indie kid, struggling to ride his fixie in tight jeans. If you're bored of record shops and overpriced vintage boutiques, then an occasional game of 'Hipster or Homeless Guy' should keep you entertained, or you might even run into the famous 'YOU MUST ENGAGE' guy on the 86 tram. This is definitely the place to get a terrace house or cute old cottage, or even a flat above one of those kebab shops.

St Kilda
Close to both the beach and the city, St Kilda still somehow manages to be a little bit shit. Proximity to the Espy may be a pro or con, depending on your perspective. There's a slightly trashy nightlife, with plenty of good music to be had, but there's definitely plenty of wannabe musicians to avoid. On the downside, apparently it's a hangout for prostitutes, but on the upside... prostitutes! An apartment with a view is called for in St Kilda.

Brunswick
Much like Fitzroy, but with a slightly higher risk of getting stabbed, Brunswick will give you the Mediterranean side of hipster living. Not only can you access the Mecca of all jeans-wearing hipsters (the name of which shan't be divulged, so that certain writers and editors don't have to wait yet longer in a queue for their next pair), but there are also plenty of shisha and European-style supermarkets. This is a suburb of warehouse parties and all-night kebab shops, and the deceptively ugly Sydney Rd. It's worth transferring to Melbourne Uni to justify living here... almost. This is where the idyllic student share house should be.

Narre Warren
Narre Warren is where Fountain Gate is located, and Fountain Gate was the inspiration for Fountain Lakes, and Fountain Lakes is where Kath and Kim live. That's about all you need to know, really. This is the land of tracksuit pants, cashed-up bogan private school kids, fake tans, fake nails, fake hair, fake everything. Avoid, avoid, avoid at all costs. Flee from the generic suburban brick homes as if your life depended on it.

Malvern
Yuppies and yummy mummies sipping skinny cappuccinos are the common breed in Malvern, filling the innumerable cafes, which themselves may only be outnumbered by the overpriced clothing boutiques. Watch out for inept SUV drivers accidentally running over their own children. On the plus side, some of the cafes and specialty food stores are actually quite nice, so if you can afford the rent, there's no reason why you shouldn't find yourself an apartment there.

Shitty by the Bay: St Kilda Beach
Image: Joe Bennett



INTERESTING ETYMOLOGIES: A COLD SHOULDER

Asher Cameron

In the last edition, Jonathon gave us a lovely description of how frickin' cold Monash gets during winter, but now the first breath of 'the spring of the year' is now in the air (or, y'know, just 'spring' to us modern folks). Originally meaning 'the source of water from the ground', 'spring' later came to refer to any emergent state and furthermore to the emergent season at the start of the year (at least in the Northern Hemisphere). Spring may have sprung, but here I am being plagued by a different kind of cold, a head cold.

We now know that the common cold is a viral infection (the name virus predates the discovery of viral infections and is derived from the Latin word for poison) and not, as long thought, the consequence of being out in the cold or wet too long. This outdated thinking gives us expressions such as the chills, and the confusing doublet of *to catch a cold* and *to catch cold*. The latter of this pair seems to be becoming more associated with the idea of *the chills* (simply being cold and chattery) whereas

catching a cold relates to the viral infection. While we might be catching a cold in English, the Japanese will be *plucking* or *pulling* the disease, which literally translates to *wicked wind*. I don't know about you, but a springtime virus feels much more like plucking the wicked wind to me. That awful symptom of mucous inflammation of the nose and throat when you're sick? That's catarrh, from the Greek *katá* 'down' + *rhéō* 'I flow'. It's the same flow we see at the end of diseases such as diarrhoea (*dia* 'through') and gonorrhoea (*gonos* 'sperm'; the same root of the word 'gonad'). Even good old phlegm is taken from the Greek *phlegma* 'flame, inflammation'.

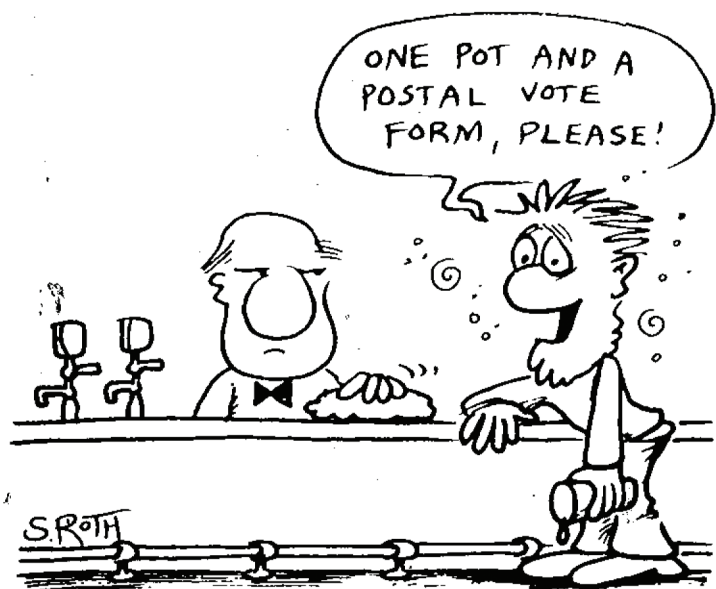
I've probably gotten you feeling about as sick as I do right now, so I guess I'll end with a topic to make you feel worse. Student elections are coming up, giving you an opportunity to vote (from Latin *votum* 'a vow, wish') to elect (Latin again, *e[xi]-* 'out' + *legere* 'pick') your student council (more Latin, *con-* 'together' +

calare 'summon'). The Greeks gave us this system; it's called democracy (*dēmos* 'the people' + *-kratia* 'power, rule').



// CALENDAR //

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
LOT'S WRITERS MEETING EVERY MONDAY 1:00PM IN THE LOT'S WIFE LOUNGE	MSA TUESDAYS EVERY TUESDAY FROM 12:00PM ON THE MENZIES LAWN	MSA UNEARTHED EVERY WEDNESDAY FROM 12:30PM IN THE AIRPORT LOUNGE
FREE FOOD MONDAYS EVERY MONDAY 7:30PM IN THE AIRPORT LOUNGE		MSA BREAKFAST EVERY WEDNESDAY FROM 8:00 - 10:30 IN THE CELLAR ROOMS, CAMPUS CENTRE
SAVE THE DATE		
WEEK 9 SEPTEMBER 17-20	WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 17	TUESDAY OCTOBER 2
MSA ELECTION WEEK	DEADLY BALL SIR JOHN'S BAR, 7:00PM \$15 INCLUDING BEER	INDIGENOUS STRUGGLE: ROBBIE THORPE SPEAKS ROTUNDA, ROOM R7, 12:00PM



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MONDAY

15

10,000 Steps
All campuses

TUESDAY

16

Race for Sustainability
Clayton campus

WEDNESDAY

17

Bicycle Ride to Campus Day
All campuses

THURSDAY

18

Public Transport and Shuttle Bus
Berwick, Caulfield, Clayton
Gippsland and Peninsula

FRIDAY

19

Carpool
Berwick, Caulfield,
Clayton and Peninsula

ALL WEEK

15-19

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