

THE ILLAWARRA flame

December 2022



Keeping community news alive

Raiders of the Lost Land

SPAT panto gives a classic
adventure a feminist twist



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Meet Our Contributors



Brian Kelly first stepped into the *Illawarra Mercury* office as the new kid from Thirroul nearly 40 years ago and is still managing (just) to hold on tight to a career he is grateful has dragged him to the UK (10 years), then Perth and Melbourne before a return to the district in 2008. He deems it a pleasure to get back into the grassroots stories of the northern suburbs.



Beth Farmer works in communications and has been involved with SPAT for the past few years, both on the stage, in *Steel Magnolias* and in this year's Panto, *Montana Smith and the Raiders of the Lost Land*, and behind the scenes as publicity officer and producer.



Barbara Knox has worked for UPA for 17 years as a PA and for the past six years has been Manager of Hillcrest Retirement Village at Stanwell Park. She's an avid historian and genealogist and together with one of her village residents has recently published a new book about the area, *Black Coal to Diamond*.



Vicki Christie moved to Wollongong in 2010. She's always been interested in bush walking and gardening so when she retired in 2020 the Illawarra Rhododendron Garden beckoned. She started volunteering one day a week but that quickly became twice a week and now Vicki is the garden's secretary. She loves spending time there, working and enjoying the wildlife, flowers and rainforest.



Dr Jeffrey Hall graduated from the University of Sydney in 1995 and undertook general practice training in regional NSW and the UK before settling in the Illawarra in 1999. He joined Bulli Medical Practice in 1999 and became a managing partner in 2001. He supervises medical students from the University of Wollongong and General Practice Registrars from GP Synergy.



Caitlin Sloan was born and raised in Helensburgh and was the fifth generation of her family to attend the local public school, graduating in 2010 – almost a century after her great-great-grandmother. Caitlin studied at UOW and has a passion for writing, travel and good wine.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The publishers acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their cultural and spiritual connection to this land. Their stories are written in the land and hold great significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, from the mountains to the sea.



Merry Christmas to all our readers

It's been an exciting year, as your community magazine began with a rebrand, then launched a website, digital newsletters and social media before finishing off the year with a celebration of true storytelling at the first I Am Not Making This Up festival in November.

Weekday newsletters will pause from Dec 16-Jan 16. You can still read local news, submit events (it's free!), book ads and write us a letter via the website.

theillawarraflame.com.au

THE ILLAWARRA
flame

NEXT
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the Jan
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COVER Emma Reid & Adam Wade of Stanwell Park Arts Theatre. Photo: Anthony Warry

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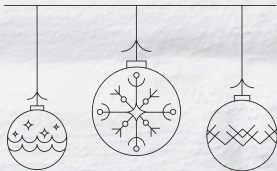
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Thank you for your ongoing support.

From our families to yours, we wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy & healthy 2023.



Julie York
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Santa Claus is coming to town!

By Captain Roslyn Thomas, of 325 Station Helensburgh



We are very excited to let our local community know that Santa will be visiting the children of Helensburgh and Stanwell Tops on Saturday, 17 December 2022.

Fire and Rescue NSW, 325 Helensburgh Station will depart with Santa on board about 9am from the Fire Station in Walker Street to hand out pre-packed lollies. There will be plenty of lollies to go around so no one will miss out.

We would like to thank Kिरrily Sloane for organising the lolly donations from Tradies Helensburgh, and to our local Lions Club, who have been long-time sponsors of the Santa Run.

We ask that you all observe our safety requirements during the Lolly Run to ensure everyone's safety.

We hope you all have a very happy and safe Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Be fire safe over the coming holiday period.

Season's greetings to you all, from Station 325 Fire + Rescue NSW. ✨

Bulli High exhibits Art Academy work

Students are finishing off the year in style with a show at Thirroul Library, writes teacher Tony Cabassi

It has been a very successful year for the inaugural running of the Bulli High School Art Academy. This extra-curricular program was designed to provide students, who were identified through an application process as being gifted in the Visual Arts, to pursue areas of interest and develop their expertise in an art discipline. It also supports the Year 7 Enrichment Arts Class and Stage 5 Visual Arts Elective programs run at Bulli High School.

The students have thrived in the program, which has both supported and challenged them to push themselves to produce some outstanding works. These works will be on view to the public thanks to the generous support of Thirroul Library.

The 25 students, from Year 7 to 10, have produced 17 paintings, eight drawings, two lino-prints and two ceramic works. The students explored a range of themes, from highly realistic portraits to abstract palette-knife paintings.

The response from the students has been overwhelmingly positive. They have appreciated having the freedom to choose their own learning and the opportunity to try new things. They have also stated that they really

enjoyed being able to work in a way that wasn't restricted by time or curriculum constraints.

The students are very excited that they will get to exhibit their works at Thirroul Library. This exhibition will begin on Friday, 2 December and will run for a few weeks.

Sincere thanks to Thirroul Library and Katrina Henze for supporting the students at Bulli High School. ✨



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Shop local designs

Discover clothing that celebrates the Illawarra this Christmas, writes Caitlin Sloan



Amp up with Grand Pacific Customs

Ahead of their second birthday in December, Grand Pacific Customs have launched their latest collection of coastal-inspired tees designed at their Thirroul HQ and handprinted in the Illawarra.

Founded by Gideon Rogers – who, by day, serves the community as a firefighter – the streetwear clothing brand is a true passion project built upon the idea that “the Illawarra is one of the greatest places on earth”, Gideon says. “Not just because of the natural beauty and the amount of surf breaks and great road twisties, but because the community is so creatively productive.”

Grand Pacific Customs’ latest drop features the address tee, beginning with their HQ town of Thirroul (with pre-orders for more Illawarra suburbs available online), tees with a revamped 70s-style take on their logo, and the AMPED tee that has been donned by DJs in places as far-flung as Europe. Gideon says that each design pays homage to our unique region.

“There are a lot of great companies here generating their own streetwear, the artists are awesome, but there wasn’t one approach that galvanised the whole of the region from the city limits to the Sapphire Coast,” Gideon said.

“Byron has a streetwear brand that symbolises their vibe, but there wasn’t one for the Illawarra that was inclusive of the moto, surf and skate and creative communities.

“We just had to capture that vibe because there is nowhere as cool and as laid-back as the Illawarra.”

Visit grandpacificcustoms.com or follow @grandpacificcustoms on Instagram, Facebook

Head to Northie

Late last year, Helensburgh’s Jessica Peach not only recognised a gap in the local clothing market but a great opportunity to bridge it, rushing to pitch a business idea to her obliging dad, Tom.

Inspired by the lack of keepsake gift options in the northern Illawarra, Jessica came up with the idea for an apparel brand and launched Northie last November. With Tom’s help, she set up an online Shopify store to sell her designs and bring her small business dream to life.

The real surprise is that Jessica, who heads the design and social media marketing of Northie’s products, is only 15 years old.

“I have grandparents overseas and they love when they come down here, buying things that they can then take back and be like, ‘Look, we got this here,’” Jessica said.

“You’ve got all this stuff for like Bondi and Manly, and even Cronulla has heaps of merch for it, but you go further [south] and people just have no idea what you’re talking about.

“We want to do that for our area as well.”

Northie’s collection spans from graphic tees, hoodies and headwear to dog bandanas, beach towels and key rings – all emblazoned with the names of northern Illawarra suburbs.

Jessica says new designs and an expansion to Northie’s clothing range, which will incorporate more suburbs, are in the works.

View the full Northie range at northie.com.au.

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Teen, 14, releases debut album

By Caitlin Sloan

A 14-year-old Thirroul singer-songwriter, Will Haynes, released his debut album, *changing?*, on November 19 at a sold-out gig at Austinmer's All Saints' Anglican Church.

The Smith's Hill High School student was expecting more than 120 people and planned to perform all 13 tracks from his album, with at least eight of his school peers-turned-bandmates joining him on stage during the performance.

"I love performing live, so I definitely am planning more live shows in the future," Will said.

Will, who describes his music as a blend of R'n'B, pop and alternative indie, only discovered his passion for singing and producing music last year during a school music assessment.

In the short time since, he's already captured the attention of Australian artists Budjerah, grentperez, and *The Voice* 2021 winner Bella Taylor Smith, whose partner, Josh Cole, co-produced *changing?*

"I'm a big fan of Bella," Will said.

"I found [Josh] through her and then emailed him and ended up becoming very well-acquainted with both of them and having a great time in the studio making the song that we produced together, which is called *Stay with me*."

Will's lyrics are often inspired by his own experiences, which he believes many listeners can relate to. Will lost his father to cancer earlier this year, and Will said *changing?* wouldn't be the album it is without the guidance of his dad.

"He got into studios a lot, had his own equipment, [and] he knew a lot about music," Will said. "I would always show him the songs first, and he would help with lots of feedback."

Not only does Will write and compose his own music, but he records and produces his songs at his home studio in Thirroul.

"I just felt really inspired to make a nice room that felt comfortable and happy and cosy to sort of make [my music] in," he said.

"I play guitar, a little bit of piano, a little bit of cello, a little bit of trumpet and maybe drums every now and again."

Will says the title track and *Stay with me* are the songs he's most proud of. "I thought [*changing?*] was the biggest, I guess, the most emotive song on the album in the sense that I made it in the middle of a family gathering in the corner of a room.

"I suddenly got the idea and recorded into my phone, and it ended up having eight string parts, an orchestral section and beautiful instruments, [and] it was a very cathartic song to make."

changing? is available via all good music streaming services 🌟



Singer-songwriter Will Haynes, age 14. Photo: Lachy Starling

Perry wins gold medal

By Jo Fahey of Darkes Glenbernie Orchard

Cider Australia announced the winners of the 2022 Australian Cider Awards at a gala dinner at Lot 100 in the Adelaide Hills in November.

At the dinner, Darkes Cider was awarded a Gold medal for Darkes Perry in the 'Speciality Styles Lighter Strength Cider Or Perry' class.

We are absolutely thrilled with this result. This medal was one of only nine gold medals awarded across 24 categories of cider in a field of 212 Australian and international entries. Darkes Perry was also awarded Best Lighter Strength Cider or Perry.

Our Perry is light, fruity and getting better

and better. It has also won Best Perry at the Red Hill Cider Show and World's

Best Sparkling Perry at the World Cider Awards in 2021. It's fantastic to be recognised so highly. We are a small producer punching well above our weight and our future – as the last apple farm in Wollongong making the world's best ciders – is really exciting. 🌟



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Thinking Through Pink

By Brian Kelly

There's something special about the colour pink. Roses, lilies ... elephants? Then there are the idioms it colours. It's assigned to stereotypes, politics. Think pink long enough and you can see what Miley Cyrus meant when she said it was not just a hue but an attitude.

Pink is the sole focus of a new exhibition at Wollongong Art Gallery – and it seems curator Dr Sally Gray is something of a repeat offender in that space. “In the *Realm of the Lotus* exhibition at Wollongong in 2003, we painted the gallery walls pink, and, of course, the lotus itself is mainly in a beautiful range of shades of pink.

“Colour has always been a part of my creativity one way or another, whether it's the way I dress, I paint and decorate my homes, or artists I chose to work with,” she says.

For Dr Gray, the *Thinking Through Pink* exhibition draws from an “intersection of gender, sexual politics and visual culture”; it aims to invite viewers to dive into the colour, “to swim about in its ambience, to breathe in its pleasures”.

There is much to breathe in. The colour has done its share of heavy-lifting over millennia, being associated with frivolity, queerness, femininity, popular culture and kitsch. Then there were the news headlines four years ago exalting it as the “world's oldest” colour, having been discovered in rocks 1.1 billion years old.

The exhibition includes works from the gallery's own collection, the Powerhouse collection, posters from second-wave feminist artists Jan Fieldsend and Marie McMahon, and works from artists Dr Gray invited for the event.

As the arts emerge from the pandemic, Dr Gray says: “We need to see the arts as a national good ... Creative thinking is necessary for all urban and regional life, for individual well-being and the survival of the planet. It's that important.”

[Thinking Through Pink, Wollongong Art Gallery, December 4-March 5.](#) ✨



Acrylic brooch by Peter Tully, c. 1990

Austinmer playwright Hung-Yen Yang's *A Practical Guide to Self Defence* was at IPAC



Theatre Calls

By Kelly-Maree Michael

We're lucky to have an abundance of the arts in the Illawarra – and this includes a thriving theatre community. In November I was lucky to catch an outstanding performance of *A Practical Guide to Self Defence* at Merrigong, an enchanting own-story focusing on growing up Asian in Wollongong told through the lens of martial arts with incredible stuntwork.

The Illawarra is also home to seven amateur theatre groups between Shellharbour and Stanwell Park that have permanent performance spaces – and we've all been extremely busy.

In November, Arcadians and Wollongong Workshop Theatre performed *Les Misérables* and *The Crucible* respectively to sold-out audiences, and the Phoenix Theatre in Coniston wowed audiences with *Scaramouche*, a new interpretation of Moliere's comedies. Rising Arts Productions, experts in all things improv, have hardly switched the lights off, and at the end of November produced eight new, locally written plays as part of their second Plays by the Rules festival.

If you're looking for end-of-year-entertainment, there just may be time to catch Rising Arts' *Fiasco*, an improvised Christmas play. Wollongong Workshop Theatre is hosting a 70th anniversary party on December 10, including a screening of a documentary by local actor/writer/comedian Johnny Sumelj; and December and January will be the battle of the pantomimes – SPAT's annual event is on weekends in December, and Roo Theatre in Shellharbour is putting on a fun production of *Pinocchio* in January. These companies are friendly rivals, though, and six of them come together annually for a light-hearted improv comedy night, *Playmates* (produced by Blackbox Productions), at the Phoenix Theatre on December 16. This year will include a group from Nowra for the first time.

If being in the audience isn't enough – keep an eye out for audition notices and get involved. ✨

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Is this Conceptual Art?

By Kieran Tapsell

The Northern Illawarra Art Trail was held on the weekend of 19 and 20 November. A few days before, while walking through the bush, I came across this bucket of wet plaster dumped in between some of the nests in the Stanwell Avenue Reserve. It looked like a case of malicious dumping by a rogue plasterer. However, another possibility is that it is an exquisite example of “conceptual art” entitled *Plaster with Bucket* by an anonymous Phantom Plaster Dumper (“PPD”).

“Conceptual art” has flourished since 1917 when Marcel Duchamp submitted a urinal entitled *Fountain* to an exhibition. The curators accepted that anything taken out of context can be art, and you would not expect a urinal to be exhibited on a wall in an art gallery, just like you would not expect a bucket of left-over plaster at Art in the Park.

In 1993 New York’s Museum of Modern Art exhibited Gabriel Orozco’s shoebox on a floor to be kicked around by patrons. In 2013, Argentinian artist Enrique Jezik won the Premio ArteBA prize for his package, accidentally sent to the gallery without his painting in it. In 2019, the Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan sold a banana taped to a gallery wall for \$120,000. In 2021, Italian artist Salvatore Garau sold a vacuum, that is, nothing, for €15,000.

Art critic Alfredo Herrera de Haro has praised the PPD work, saying: “The line is almost perfectly straight, but not quite. It reminds us that nothing is straight or perfect in the universe.”

Art critic Roman Dabrowski has described *Plaster with Bucket* as “a striking masterpiece that has already cemented its place in modern art”.

I thought it had a profound meaning, since the



plaster was obviously scattered when it was soft. Its message is that soft things always go hard. Just give them time.

Professor Robin Knox from Tasmania thinks the meaning is clear: “Unless you are soft, you need to get plastered straight away before you kick the bucket. It’s not hard.”

Art critic Erick J. Mitsak thinks “a community effort should be undertaken to unmask the PPD to give them the accolades they so richly deserve”. He suspects the artist will come out of the closet, because celebrity is at the centre of conceptual art and “limelight gets them every time”.

The final decision on *Plaster with Bucket’s* future will be made by Council, which manages the land on behalf of the Crown, His Majesty, King Charles III. It is possible the Council’s art curators will decide the PPD’s work will be replaced by a copy of Salvatore Garau’s masterpiece, namely, nothing. ✨



Above: *Plaster With Bucket*, a surprise hit on the Northern Illawarra Art Trail. Photos: Kieran Tapsell



Tree of the Month

By Kieran Tapsell, of Banksia Bushcare

Elaeocarpus reticulatus (Blueberry Ash)

Blueberry Ash is a small to medium tree that can grow in a wide variety of conditions. It is notable for its attractive white or pink flowers and blue berries.

The white variety is indigenous to the Illawarra and the more popular pink variety comes from the north coast. It survives well in low-nutrient soils and can grow in various locations, from shade to full sun. The leaves are elliptical and serrated.

Gardening Australia had a segment on the Banksia Bushcare site at the end of Stanwell Avenue, which has a Blueberry Ash growing within the deer fence.

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The Common Bronzewing.
Photo: Amanda De George



Joy to the watcher

By Amanda De George of Backyard Zoology

I love common things and common moments. There's something special about the everyday, especially at this time of year when it's easy to eat too much, drink too much, run around like crazy and feel altogether exhausted. The Common Bronzewing is one of those common things that I adore. It's a native, medium-sized pigeon, which probably doesn't seem that unique. But if you take a moment to wait after the inevitable flurry of flying feathers, its specialness literally shines through.

Another day, another wander around Darkes Forest. It's one of those places where we know we'll see something interesting but just never know what that's going to be. That alone has been good for my brain, which needs reminding, especially once December rolls around, to switch off every now and then and just be in the moment.

I noticed the stocky bird up ahead, on the dirt track, pecking at the seeds that had fallen from the banksias. Even in shadow, I recognised it as a Common Bronzewing and it did exactly as expected, and dashed straight up into the nearest tree with a loud clapping of its wings. They're skittish birds at the best of times and I didn't even bother to pull my camera out. Instead, I bent down to look amongst the leaf litter and after a minute or two zoning out, I was startled by a short ruckus in the tree directly in front.

Turns out the Bronzewing had decided we were worth a closer inspection and flew into the gum, peering down at the humans below. The name 'Common Bronzewing' is not used lightly, with the bird being found in pretty much every habitat, right around the country. We stood there a while watching it watching us, waiting. And then finally our quiet determination was rewarded and the bird moved into the sun and its wings exploded with metallic highlights, the feathers shimmering with golds, greens and purples.

I hope you get a moment or two this Christmas period, to enjoy the beauty in the most common of things. ✨

The best-kept secret garden

By Vicki Christie, Illawarra Rhododendron and Rainforest Gardens secretary

The Illawarra's best-kept secret is the Illawarra Rhododendron and Rainforest Gardens, located below and within the magnificent Illawarra Escarpment in Parrish Ave, Mt Pleasant.

The gardens were established in the late 1960s by Donald Stanton and William Mearns and a group of volunteers in the Illawarra Rhododendron Society. Today they are run by a small group of volunteers. We are not funded by government, council or National Parks, we rely on your \$5 entry fee (via an honour system) and function fees.

The lower garden has a large lake, huge grassed areas, pavilions, a sunken garden and a large unique collection of rhododendrons, vireyas, camellias, magnolias and many companion plants. Our regular volunteers gather on Tuesdays and Saturdays at 9.30am and welcome newcomers.

The upper rainforest area (behind the deer fence) houses huge figs, red cedars, native orchids and other significant rainforest vegetation. We have established a monthly bush regen working bee on a Saturday and Tuesday. Walking tracks have been created in the rainforest area for hikers.

The gardens are open Tuesday, Saturday, Sunday and all public holidays, 10am-5pm. To volunteer, contact Vicki, Rhododendron.Illawarra@gmail.com or 0418 164 646.

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Can you spot the rip at Bulli Beach? Hint: it's just past the flags. Photo: Rob Brander

Dr Rip's Science of the Surf

Prof Rob Brander presents 'Rip Spotting – Part 1'

It's been a while since I've written a column about rip currents (as much as it pains me not to), but as we head into summer, it's worth asking yourself – do I know how to spot a rip?

Unless you're a surfer or regular ocean user, the answer is probably 'not as well I should' or just 'nope'. You're not alone.

Studies have shown that at least 60% of us don't know how to spot a rip. That's a big problem because rips are ubiquitous features on our surf beaches and cause an average of 26 drownings per year. That's more fatalities in an average year than those caused by bushfires, floods, cyclones and sharks – combined.

It's easy to avoid rips if you swim between the flags when lifeguards/lifesavers are present. The problem is that outside of cities and populated areas (think most South Coast holiday destinations) most beaches don't have lifeguards. So what should you do when you visit an unpatrolled beach? Learn how to spot rips first.

It's not easy. You first have to understand that rips are strong, narrow, seaward-flowing currents that occur on any beach that has a wide area of wave breaking, an area called the surf zone.

Waves break and bring water to the beach and it has to get out somewhere, but there's more to it than that. There needs to be sandbars and deep channels that cause waves to break in some areas,



but not in others. The water level always rises a little bit where waves are breaking and will always flow from areas with lots of breaking waves (like over shallow sandbars) to areas where waves aren't breaking as much (like deep gutters and troughs). That's what drives rip current flow and you often find rips flowing out through the deeper channels, or gaps, between sand bars. These channelised rips are very common on our beaches and tend to look like narrow, dark green paths through the whitewater – think 'white is nice, green is mean'.

But they are only one type of rip which makes rip-spotting tricky.

I'll talk more about rips next month, but in the meantime do yourself a favour and go to www.scienceofthesurf.com and look at the Rip of the Month page – it's the largest collection of rip current pictures in the world! And I've explained how to spot all 168 of them. Then go to www.ripcurrentsafety.com and follow the links to watch the rip current documentary *Rip Current Heroes* (or just search for it on YouTube), which was shown on National Geographic, Qantas and Jetstar. It's essential viewing for anyone who goes to the beach and, you never know, it might save a life (and keep the kids occupied for an hour).

Have a question?
Email rbrander@unsw.edu.au ✨

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Learn about Dharawal Country

“The Aboriginal name for Mt Keira is Djeera. It’s a significant women’s mountain, where ceremonies were held. Geera is linked to a local dreaming story, and she is the sister to the five sisters (the islands) off Hill 60.”

This is one of the many wonderful stories about Dharawal Country shared at a new tourism attraction at the Southern Gateway Visitor Information Centre at Bulli Tops.

Initiated by Destination Wollongong and the Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation, the Dharawal Country Experience includes a panoramic photo showcasing Aboriginal places and names; student artworks; fun facts for children; and nine screens showing a film of Dharawal Elders telling stories of Dharawal Country that was commissioned by Wollongong Council, as well as videos from the former Jumbulla Aboriginal Interpretive Centre.

Julie-Anne Francis, Visitor Services Manager at Destination Wollongong, kindly took time to tell us more about the experience.

Please tell us a bit about yourself.

I am a proud Aboriginal woman from the Bundjalung and Gunditjmarra clans. I have two sons and moved to the Illawarra from the Sutherland Shire in 2006. I have been with Destination Wollongong for 11 years, managing the Visitor Information Centre.

What inspired you to set up the exhibition?

Destination Wollongong started their Reconciliation Action Plan journey in 2019. We

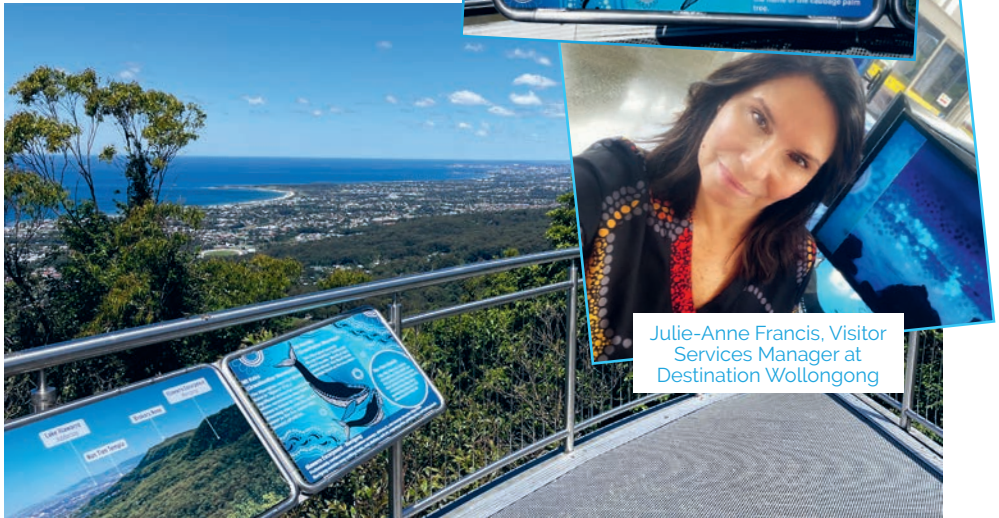
collaborated with the Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation to initiate this new tourism product.

We recognised our unique location at the Southern Gateway Centre and the importance of reviving a learning platform like the Cultural Centre that existed here in 2009 (Jumbulla), telling the beautiful stories of people and places that make Dharawal Country.

How does visiting an exhibition like this help promote reconciliation?

Reconciliation is about strengthening connections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples through stories and language. The stories in our video presentations are about cultural significance, importance of the fauna and flora, and our connection to this land.

We hope visitors learn the spiritual connection Aboriginal people have to this land, our belonging, obligation and responsibility to care





for this land, so that we can all move forward with acceptance and equality.

What do you hope visitors will take away from the experience?

A small insight into my people's culture, Aboriginal culture, and an understanding of some of our historical struggles, the beauty in the land through song, story and language.

My hope is that visitors share their beautiful exchange with family, friends and colleagues, and this ignites their passion to learn more about the First Peoples of this land. If just one person shares their experience, learns to say "Hello" in Dharawal, then my job is done!

What else can visitors do at Bulli Tops?

Our Visitor Information Centre has plenty of information to help plan your next holiday, and souvenirs, including artworks from local Aboriginal artists.

The centre also boasts the Gelato Emporium and restaurant Altitude1148 so visitors and locals can enjoy lunch/ dinner whilst enjoying 180-degree ocean views over the Illawarra.

The Southern Gateway Visitor Information Centre (M1 Princes Motorway, Bulli Tops) is open seven days a week excluding Christmas day. Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat-Sun 10am -3pm, 02 4267 5910. visitwollongong.com.au 📍



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Park, but it also encompasses the surrounding areas from Otford to Clifton. It provides historical information about the family of John Fletcher Hargrave and his four children (Ralph, Lawrence, Gilbert and Alice), who called this area home and how they helped put the area on the map.

There is also insight into other characters, such as boarding house proprietors, who encouraged visitors to stay in such a remote place.

Readers will learn about Margaret Campbell, who donated the Hillcrest site to UPA in 1961 for aged care use, the building of the early retirement cottages and the restoration of Hillcrest House achieved together with Friends of Hillcrest Group. The book also covers the more recent building of the new Hillcrest Retirement Village and Frank & Jess Kennett Home on the site.

The 360-page book contains many beautiful photos, some of which were only uncovered during the three years of research for the book, published by Hillcrest custodians, UPA Sydney.

To buy a copy of the book at a cost of \$45, please contact Barbara Knox from Hillcrest Village on 8197 9304 or email barbara.knox@sydney.upa.org.au. It would be a beautiful Christmas gift. ✨

Discover history of Hillcrest

By Barbara Knox

Black Coal to Diamond, by myself and Graham Thwaite, is about “Hillcrest” at Stanwell Park, the Hargrave family, coal deposits in the Northern Illawarra and 60 years of aged care on the site.

Our new book was officially launched on 23 September at historic Hillcrest House with about 60 people in attendance, including Michael Adams (author of several books about Stanwell Park) and Janet Lee (Helensburgh Historical Society).

The book is about the Hillcrest site at Stanwell



Fire & Rescue reunion

By Jim Powell, retired captain of Station 325 Helensburgh

On Saturday night, 22 October at the Helensburgh Hotel, 10 former members of 325 Fire Station Helensburgh and some of their partners held a reunion dinner organised by Ross and Pam Fagerstrom. It was a great night and many old stories were revisited. It's well worth noting that we ex-firies represent a combined 198 years of Fire & Rescue experience!

Compared to the modern equipment and uniforms of today, our equipment in the 1970s and 80s would seem antiquated. We had no breathing apparatus and very basic head helmets; we had a simple first aid kit and our only rescue gear was a crowbar and our axes. We had no chemical-detecting devices, no fire-fighting foam, only in fire extinguishers. We had a large extension ladder and scaling ladders, but no walkie-talkies for communications, only whistles and hand signals.

During our careers, we had to enter smoke-filled houses without breathing apparatus, and attending house fires and removing people from cars after road accidents were very dangerous rescue jobs. However, we were a very successful team and we gladly responded to any challenges that came our

way to help our community in their hour of need.

Those present at the reunion were: Ross & Pam Fagerstrom, Kerry & Joan Gardner, Greg & Sue Greening, Jeff & Marie Collins, Murray & Roslyn Austin, Jim Powell & Jenny Donohoe, Noel Kinred, Basil Crowe, John Walker and Les Kiddle.

We all had a most enjoyable evening and hope to have more old members at our next Fire Fighters reunion. ✨



Former members of 325 Fire Station Helensburgh at their reunion dinner. Photo: Jenny Donohoe

Stress less this festive season

By Dr Jeff Hall of Bulli Medical Practice

While many of us think of the holiday season as a time of celebration and joy, for some it can be fraught with stress, anxiety, social isolation and family tension or conflict.

Celebrations often come with unrealistic expectations, and aspirations to have the perfect meal, decorations, gifts and family interactions. But these rarely run to plan. It is important to set realistic expectations and focus on what matters to you most.

For those who don't have family or who have limited social connections, the holiday season can be a time of increased loneliness. Try to seek out companionship within your local community. Look out for local events and celebrations you can be part of and consider volunteering to help others at this time.

For some people, the season can be a time of increased stress caused by social interactions. This may have been compounded by Covid-19 restrictions over the past two years, as some people are simply out of the habit of socialising or still feel fearful of the risk of Covid-19 infection.

It often helps to set boundaries to keep stress



and anxiety in check. You can limit the number of people you see and the number of events you attend.

You don't have to do everything you've done in previous years, especially high-stress rituals (such as queuing for Santa photos, excessive gift buying, preparing elaborate feasts or battling the Boxing Day sales). Prioritise what is most important to you and give yourself a break.

With high inflation rates, financial stress is predicted to be greater this season so set realistic spending limits to stay within your budget.

Try to engage in activities that reduce stress such as meditation, going for a walk or swim, getting out into nature or listening to music.

Also try to maintain your normal healthy habits including eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and drinking alcohol in moderation. If you have the occasional set-back, remember to be kind to yourself.

The Bulli Medical Practice team wish our patients, their families and friends a wonderful festive season, and a happy, healthy year in 2023. 🍀

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Sweet harmonies

By Felicity Woodhill, founder of the Music and Tea at the Gallery concert series

Original songs and beautiful two-part vocal harmonies by Shalani Thomas and harmony singer and percussionist Paris Whiteley provided a magical morning of storytelling at November's Music and Tea concert at Wollongong Art Gallery.

Lead singer Shalani effortlessly accompanied herself on the guitar while using melody to tell stories and share experiences. Her subjects ranged from belonging, social change, gender and the environment to ghosts and being in a moment.

Shalani's gentle yet quietly penetrating voice was highly nuanced, creating light and shade while sustaining a beautiful melodic line. Paris's sensitive and agile response to Shalani's rhythm and the melodic line showed a truly collaborative approach to creating exquisite harmony.

The use of sweet harmony was also evident in Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts student Lillie Hobden's selection of songs spanning three different genres, culminating in an aria by Puccini. Her confident and musical delivery captivated the audience.

A Special Place to Perform

Shalani and Paris expressed appreciation for the opportunity to present a set of original songs in the BlueScope Gallery at Wollongong Art Gallery: "A beautiful resonant space with a seated audience

provided a different performing experience to our usual audience at live gigs."

Shalani, Paris and their friend Kiya will be appearing as their band, Dear Violet, at the 2023 Illawarra Folk Festival. They will be telling more stories through song using three-part harmony.

Last 'Music and Tea' concert of the year

11am, Thursday, December 8: Jazz Trio and New Compositions by Alec Watt with a Prelude of Flute Music by Annabel Wouters and David Vance ✨



Shalani Thomas and Paris Whiteley wow the crowd



What's On

Find more events at www.theillawarraflame.com.au

Girl Guides Christmas Tree Sale

Friday, 2 Dec at the Helensburgh Girl Guides Hall. And Saturday, 3 Dec from 8am if not sold out prior. All proceeds to Helensburgh Girl Guides Unit.

GreenFest

Sunday, 4 Dec 10am-3pm at Corrimal High School. Corrimal Rotary's family-friendly sustainability day. Fun, food and music with a sculpture competition, www.corrimalrotary.org.au

Join the Illawarra Film Society

2023 memberships are \$90 per annum. IFS presents arthouse, classic, documentary, and foreign films at the Gala Cinema, Warrawong, on Sunday nights. Call Lynn Read (0418 495 898) for more details, or visit www.ifs.org.au

Helensburgh Library

Lego Club Tuesday, 6 Dec 3.30-4.30pm, free.
Preschool Storytime 9 Dec, 10.30-11.15am

Thirroul Library

Thu 1 Dec 10.30am First Thursday Book Club. Reading *Circe* by Madeline Miller

Preschool Programs – weekly during term time

Baby Beats – Thursdays 10am
Toddler Time – Fridays 10am
Preschool Story Time – Tuesdays 10am
Lego Club – 2nd & 4th Wed of each month.

For updates on carols, markets and community events in December, sign up for e-news ✨



2022 NINA OUTINGS DECEMBER

Bookings made through the office. Please call in advance as some tickets need to be pre purchased. Limited number on buses. Pick up and drop off direct to your home.

DATE	DESTINATION	DETAILS
Friday 2nd Dec	Sylvania Shopping	\$11
Monday 5th Dec	Woronora Cemetery Visit	\$11
Tuesday 6th Oct	Bunnings – Kembla Grange	\$11
Thursday 8th Dec	Music & Tea at Wollongong Art Gallery	\$10.50
Friday 9th Dec	Dapto Shopping	\$11
Friday 16th Dec	Warrawong Shopping	\$11

NINA will be closed from Friday 23rd December and will open on Tuesday 3rd January 2023



We would like to wish all our clients and volunteers a very Merry Christmas. Thank you for another fabulous year of NINA. Looking forward to 2023!

Did you know you don't have to be over 65 years to use NINA's transport services?

NINA receives funding from the NSW Govt to assist commuters who find it hard to access general public transport. If you have limited or no access to private or public transport due to your location, or financial resources, physical or cognitive capacities, then NINA can help you! If you think you are transport disadvantaged and need assistance then please give the office a call on 4294 1900.

Nathan lives in Helensburgh and was struggling to access transportation due to his disability. He says: "NINA has been really helpful for me. I was struggling walking home with my shopping and a friend suggested I get in touch with NINA. The way their transport service is door to door takes a lot of stress out of getting to appointments. It's much cheaper than a taxi and the drivers are always so friendly and happy to help."

Art for Heart's Sake

Local volunteers are organising trivia nights to raise funds for headspace

The Art for Heart's Sake trivia night at Wombarra Bowlo on 25 November was set to auction works by Tanya Stubbles and other local artists to raise funds to support youth mental health.

"All the proceeds go to headspace, which is an organisation in Wollongong that helps young people with mental illness and anxiety, depression," said event organiser Gavin Pugh.

Started in 2006, headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, which provides early intervention mental health services to those aged 12 to 25.

Community events, like Art for Heart's Sake, play a vital role in helping headspace to fund new programs and grow its reach, with statistics showing that each year one in four young people will experience a mental health issue.

The Wombarra trivia night is the third in a series of fundraisers that Gavin, a Thirroul local, started a few months ago.

"I'm doing this as a concerned parent, who has noticed a rise in anxiety and depression in young adults," he said.

"We had one at Ryan's and one at Frank's Wild Years, which was a music quiz."

The first two events raised about \$3000, but Gavin was hoping for "a bit more with the art auction". The local community also rallied to support the cause, including Wombarra's Carissa Lea, who helped source raffle prizes from local businesses for the Bowlo trivia night.

People aged 12-25 seeking help for a mental health problem should contact headspace at www.headspace.org.au ✨



Fundraiser organisers
Gavin Pugh and Carissa
Lea. Photo: Jo Reed



Probus throws O'Party

By publicity officer Helen Durham

We now have vacancies at our very active Helensburgh Probus Club. Come and join one of our meetings or one of our wonderful activities or walks to see what our club has to offer.

We have an interesting guest speaker after our general meeting, held at Tradies Helensburgh at 10.30am on the second Thursday of each month. Most members then enjoy lunch in the Bistro.

Our club is for retired, semi-retired or soon-to-be-retired people from all walks of life.

Our golfers play monthly at different courses and we have an active lawn bowls group, who play at Scarborough-Wombarra Bowling Club.

We had an O'Party for all our members who turned 70, 80 or 90 in the past three years. What a party it was, with 38 people celebrating birthdays. Unfortunately only 23 members were able to attend the party at Engadine Hotel, where the birthday girls and boys enjoyed a delicious cake.

Our October walk entailed a train to Parramatta before walking through Parramatta Park. We walked alongside the river and saw Old Government House and the Old Dairy; hundreds of flying foxes hanging in the trees; and many wildflowers along our way. Then we enjoyed lunch at Parramatta Leagues Club.

A recent guest speaker was Kaye Morrison, an Audio Describer volunteer at Vision Australia who helps vision-impaired people enjoy the theatre by describing what's happening on stage, including words, actions, colours, sets, clothes. Our other guest speaker was Ralph Scrivens, an Australian Bush Poet who recited many and varied poems with such expression and gusto.

For more information please contact our Membership Officer Lilian on 0408 668 98. ✨



Heathcote Community Update A letter from Lee Evans – your State MP

Dear Residents,

Since 2011 you have trusted me to deliver for the Northern Illawarra and this is a trust I continually seek to deserve.

I was thrilled in November to announce \$3.2 million for a much needed upgrade to Helensburgh Pool but I am always looking to do more.

This year I have been working with the Presidents of Helensburgh Sporting Clubs (Rugby League, Soccer,

Netball, Cricket, Little Athletics and Off Road Cycle) to come up with a future proofed solution for Rex Jackson Oval.

Together we agree that a “Helensburgh Sporting Precinct” will benefit our local community for many years to come. With multi purpose, purpose built facilities to enhance all clubs that utilise the field. Both the Sports Minister and Premier Perrotto visited Rex Jackson Oval and listened to the pleas of the executive to find a way. Sport is the backbone of our local

community and I will keep pressure on my colleagues to find a way to support all players and clubs with improved facilities. I will keep you informed.

As Christmas approaches, I urge you as a community to reach out to a neighbour or friend who may be doing it tough and help to make their Christmas a special one.

To everyone I wish you a peaceful and safe Christmas and a very happy and prodigious New Year.

Lee Evans,
Member for Heathcote

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The best Xmas gift you can give!

This Christmas, choose your own adventure at Symbio, writes Kevin Fallon

With Christmas just around the corner, there is no better present than the gift of making memories your loved ones will never forget.

At Symbio, you can choose your own adventure, from Season Passes – which give 12 months of unlimited access to our animals, splash park, and adventure playground – through to our Junior Keeper Camps, which run every school holiday, and behind-the-scenes experiences with Meerkats, Red Pandas, Dingos, Koalas and more.

Forget the plastic toys that break in a week or end up in storage, the musical keyboards that drive parents insane, the bread makers that never get opened.

And say goodbye to battling Christmas crowds at the shopping centre. You can buy Symbio gift vouchers online from the comfort of your couch simply by visiting www.symbiozoo.com.au

When you see the huge smile on your special someone's face, it will be priceless.



Visit symbiozoo.com.au

Q&A with a gluten-free baker

Susan Luscombe chats to Saravanan (Sara) Kristnen about his new business, Bakers Chemistry

Have you always been a baker?

I am a qualified chef and pastry chef. I am from a Malaysian background and born into a fisherman family. My passion for cooking and baking started 17 years ago in Singapore after finishing high school. I worked in various organisations in Singapore, including five-star hotels. I also completed my baking certification in Singapore and did my culinary certification in Sydney.

When did you start Bakers Chemistry?

In July 2021 and it's just me with my wonderful wife, Mekala Simanchalam, who provides support.

What attracted you to gluten-free baking?

Firstly, I love challenges in every task or journey. The food for me is medicine, so has to be completely healthy and nutritious ... Many of the people I meet are coeliac and always disappointed with gluten-free products in Sydney.

So I started to explore a bit more about products in Sydney and I felt the same. My biggest disappointment is that they are mostly made using artificial ingredients and additives and are completely unhealthy.

Also I found that most of the bakeries doing gluten-free bake in the same place where the gluten breads are being baked. This is totally wrong.

So I decided to take up the challenge and use my knowledge to serve the gluten-free community.

How did you come up with the recipes?

I spent nearly eight months sourcing locally produced ingredients and another one and a half years creating recipes without using any preservatives, nasties, gums, soy, wheat and using



only extra virgin olive oil. We need simple basic food packed with nutrition to live healthily.

Do you have to get up super early every day?

Yes, to make sure the breads are freshly baked ... We have a kitchen rented in Carlton (Sydney), only baking gluten-free products.

How many varieties of bread do you make?

Currently we have seven types of bread including olive, classic white, seeded, fruity, activated charcoal and quinoa and yeast-free teff.

We do banana bread, a savoury scone, muffins, carrot and ginger cake, crackers and granola.

Where can we buy your products locally?

You can get my bread from Flame Tree Co-op in Thirroul, delivered fresh from the oven on a Wednesday. I am also at Kiama Farmers Market and Bundanoon Makers Market. ✨

Wishing Tree gifts welcome

By Fran Peppernell, of Helensburgh Lions

Hi everyone – and Ho Ho Ho!

Well, as we all know the Festive Season is upon us yet again! We're sure our community is looking forward to wonderful celebrations with family and friends this year.

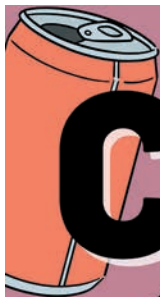
For your tasty enjoyment we will have our Lions Christmas cakes on sale outside Coles and Helensburgh Butchery.

Also, importantly, if you would like to donate a gift for a child whose family has had a challenging year you can put your gift under our Wishing Tree at Helensburgh Tradies.

Looking towards 2023 it may be your year to become a member of the Helensburgh Lions. It's a worthy and rewarding experience so come along to our General meeting on the 2nd Monday of the month and our Fair meetings on the 4th consecutive Monday of the month at 6.30pm Helensburgh Hotel.

To get in touch contact us via Facebook or email info@helensburghlions.org.au

In closing, Helensburgh Lions would like to wish our community a Happy and Safe Christmas for 2022. ✨



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2022
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CIDER

SUNDAY



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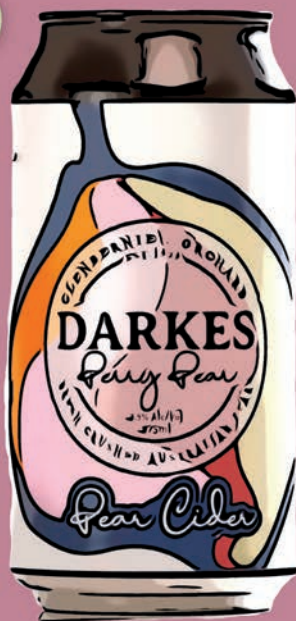


BUN ME BAR

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HOWLER (4.5%)
LITTLE BLUE (0%)
DRY (6%)
PERRY (3.5%)



LIVE MUSIC

MONDAY LANE
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LAGER



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What's the cheapest form of energy?

By Kristen McDonald of Electrify 2515

If you guessed rooftop solar, you'd be right. And the world's cheapest rooftop solar is here in Australia, truly making us the lucky country. Even if a big coal or gas power plant provided us with energy for free, the cost of transmitting it (around 10c/kWh) would still be greater than what it costs for us to produce it ourselves on our own roofs (around 3c/kWh). Meanwhile, gas and coal prices are skyrocketing, making them not only more polluting forms of energy, but more expensive. The fact that rooftop solar has become so economical makes electrification so exciting. No longer do we have to rely on the moral imperative to switch to less polluting sources of energy, it makes financial sense to do so.

If you combine this with using more efficient appliances, which means the amount of energy needed drops, there is huge potential to reduce power costs and emissions. For instance, if you heat your water (which is one of the biggest household energy users) with a heat pump water-heater it uses only 25-33% of the energy of a gas or electric resistance alternative.

Of course, the up-front cost of installing solar or any energy-efficient appliance or electric vehicle is prohibitive for many. And for others, it may be that their roofs are too shaded to benefit, or they live in

an apartment, a strata block or they rent, making solar installation difficult or near impossible.

That is why we really believe a community-wide electrification project is the way forward (think community solar arrays, community batteries, low financing options, bulk buys of efficient appliances etc) and we think that various government agencies should be supporting households, businesses and communities to make this transition. Think that would cost too much? In the 2021/22 financial year, the Australian Federal Government handed out \$11.6 billion in subsidies for fossil fuels. The same amount of money could have bought solar panels for 1.5 million homes or one electric vehicle charging station for every 12km of Australia's entire road network.

We're currently working with Rewiring Australia to seek funding to take on a community electrification pilot project so we can demonstrate to decision-makers what the future could look like – today. We're hoping to find out if we're successful early next year. Either way, we look forward to working with you in the new year to reduce our community's carbon emissions, and our power bills, so please stay tuned...

Visit www.electrify2515.org ✨



Despite living under the escarpment at the back of Thirroul, Trent Jansen, Amy Luschwitz and daughter Arie have seen the benefits of installing solar. Photo: Jeremy Park

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New NSW scheme for first-home buyers

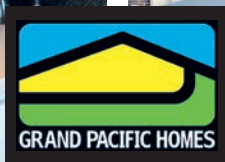
A new scheme for first-home buyers in NSW was passed into law recently that may assist buyers in our area. The First Home Buyer Choice scheme allows first-home buyers to elect to pay an annual property tax instead of stamp duty. At present first-home buyers don't pay any stamp duty up to \$650,000 and then pay concessional rates up to \$800,000. However, this scheme is available up to \$1.5m purchase price and the savings can be substantial. The annual property tax payments are based on the land value of the purchased property. The property tax rates for 2022-23 and 2023-24 are:

- \$400 plus 0.3 per cent of land value for properties whose owners live in them
- \$1,500 plus 1.1 per cent of land value for investment properties.

To compare on a purchase price of \$1.2m, stamp duty is about \$50,000, however, the annual property tax would be \$2,908.



Scan To Speak to Ian



Ways To Create More Space

By Marlowe Richards, of Grand Pacific Homes

You buy a house in a neighbourhood you love. The kids come along, and you need to make room. They go from toddler to pre-schooler and suddenly your house feels small and unliveable. You declutter and reorganise, but it's still not enough to accommodate the needs of your growing family. What do you do?

Moving is not an option – you don't want the stress and expense of buying, selling and relocating. Besides, you love where you live. You could add a room or two? But what about the outdated kitchen and the tiny bathroom you're all sharing?

Looks like a building project is on the cards, so what are your options?

Renovate Or Rebuild?

With over 400 homes completed, Grand Pacific Homes is the leading custom home builder in the Illawarra, helping families in this situation for over 15 years.

Renovate

The Green family owns a home on a sloping block. The backyard is steep and unusable. With two school-aged children, and no play space, the house feels cramped. Our design team helped the Greens weigh the options, and they decided on a major renovation. We worked together to create a custom design that addressed their family's needs, both now and into the future.

The building project was done in stages so the Green family could remain in their home throughout the build. They moved most of their belongings into the garage, squeezed the kids

into one bedroom and used the other bedroom as a lounge room. They converted the laundry into a kitchen and nestled in while their home transformed around them.

Pros and Cons

- **Rent** – Staying in their home during the renovation meant the Green family saved on rent. But the tight conditions, constant building noise, safety considerations and dust were a drawback.
- **Involvement** – Living on site, the Greens developed a good relationship with our tradies. This made for great communication and problem solving, so decisions were made quickly and easily.
- **Size** – Keeping the original building footprint meant they could maximise space and not be constrained by Council's current setback regulations.
- **Design** – Room size and arrangements were dictated by the structure of the existing house so there was compromise in the design. Had they rebuilt, the layout would have been very different.
- **Complications** – The demolition exposed areas in the house that needed to be replaced and added unanticipated expense.
- **Cost** – Renovations can be tricky and much less straightforward than a new build. By the end, the Green family had spent nearly what they would have for a knock-down rebuild.

By renovating, the Green family got more room and updated the house with a modern aesthetic. More importantly, they increased



Brothers Mark and Clint O'Connor own Grand Pacific Homes



their property value by adding a second floor that captures sea views.

Knock-Down Rebuild

The Grey family live on a flat block near a flood-prone creek. The house is old, affected by mould and is situated awkwardly on the property. The Greys have three pre-schoolers and a large extended family. They need a spacious and functional home with a large alfresco area and pool to host family gatherings.

They decided to start over and rebuild. Our design team created a layout that was beautiful, practical and protected from flood and water damage. The Greys packed up their belongings and moved in with family until they could find a rental property for the duration of the build.

Pros and Cons

- **Design** - The Greys have a completely custom-designed home that is unconstrained by an existing floor plan. They have unleashed their creativity and have built their dream home.
- **Peace of Mind** - Unlike renovating with a combination of old and new, the Greys have a brand-new modern home. Should anything go wrong, the entire house is covered under warranty.
- **Resale** - When the Grey family sells their home, it will be very attractive to buyers. It is new, the design is well thought out and addresses the needs of a growing family.
- **Living Elsewhere** - The Greys had to pay rent for a short time, an expensive addition to the building cost. But living with relatives put strain on relationships and living further

away from work and day-care made for a stressful commute.

- **Cost** - The new build cost more than a renovation, but the Grey family got exactly what they wanted, with no compromises in layout or aesthetic.
- **Delays** - The weather, the effects of Covid and the break-down in supply chains worldwide caused delays in the Greys' building project. This meant they had to pay rent longer than anticipated.

The Grey family built a home they love, that accommodates the needs of their growing family. They faced challenges along the way, but were open to solutions and focused on the end result. Their budget didn't stretch to cover the cost of the pool so they will put it in later.

If you are considering a building project, here are some helpful tips:

Tip 1 - Small Renovation: If the renovation is too small, it may be difficult to find a builder. Do your research and make inquiries with builders who specialise in that type of work.

Tip 2 - Sloping Block: Some builders, particularly project home builders, are reluctant to build on a sloping block. Grand Pacific Homes specialises in this type of work.

Tip 3 - Design/Construct: Architects and building designers are great, but if you want a budget estimate early in the design, contact a builder or work with a design/construction company.

Tip 4 - Cost Increases: Material costs are increasing. When deciding on your budget, put a portion aside to cover unforeseen costs.

Need advice? The team at Grand Pacific Homes can help.
Get in touch: (02) 4227 6405 or info@grandpacifichomes.com.au



Simple Christmas holidays from the past

By Local Studies librarian Jo Oliver

Were Christmas holidays a simpler time of year in the past? These photos seem to suggest so. Christmas cards delivered by horse, camping by the beach, no last-minute internet shopping, no struggling kids into hats or sunscreen.

Or perhaps we just romanticise the past?

Women struggled to cook hot lunches for large families with no air-conditioning and the beds in that tent at Bulgo wouldn't have been very comfortable.

Do you have any great local photos from the past? The Local Studies team at Wollongong City Libraries would love to hear from you if you would be willing to have your images scanned for the collection.

Contact us on 4227 7414 or email localhistory@wollongong.nsw.gov.au 🍀



Clockwise from top left: P12029 Mail delivery at Helensburgh on 25th November 1969;

P01263 Camping at Austinmer, 1956;

P15053 John, Beatrice Bird and Cecil Bird camping at Bulgo at Christmas, 1926;

P21972 Iona, Barbara, Jim & John from Bulli on Christmas Day, 1947



What's On at the Writers Centre

By South Coast Writers Centre director Sarah Nicholson

As we cruise together towards the end of the year, Coledale Community Hall is wrapping up with December's Film Club and the South Coast Writers Centre's end-of-year celebration event.

On December 3 at Film Club – the last one for 2022 – director Graeme Thornburn will present a screening of *As It Is In Heaven* (2004), or in Swedish: *Så som i himmelen*. The story revolves around a world-class conductor, Daniel Daréus (Michael Nyqvist), whose demanding career and high-profile life takes its toll on his health. A complete physical and emotional breakdown causes him to turn his back on his career and return to Norrland, the village of his youth in a remote part of northern Sweden, for a low-key recovery out of the spotlight. Reluctantly, he agrees to help the local choir hone their harmonising skills. His big-city ways bristle with the townsfolk, but the process of drawing out the singers' hidden gifts reinvigorates his own dormant passion for life. The choir develops and grows, and the conductor makes both friends and enemies and finds love.

On Sunday, 11th December, the South Coast

Writers Centre invites you to join them at their end-of-year celebration and the launch of *Mantle*. The 2022 anthology of writing from the South Coast Writers Centre features works from emerging, established and award-winning local writers. (Not to mention Zanny Begg's fantastic cover artwork!)



The event includes readings by the SCWC + WAG 2022 Poetry Award winners – Erin Shiels, Peter Frankis and Lore White – plus poetry and short story readings from the anthology by Kathleen Bleakley, Amelia Fielden, Mike Cavanagh, Linda Godfrey, Judi Morison, Peter Ramm, Fatima Sayed and Isabella Luna. Join us to hear these gorgeous new works, to celebrate the end of a full year's calendar, and to hear about what we have in store for 2023, including the 2023 SCWC + Wollongong Art Gallery Poetry Award!

Visit southcoastwriters.org/upcomingevents ✨

More time to shop

By the team at Collins Booksellers Thirroul

Our shelves are stocked and already selling for Christmas, so get in early and avoid the last-minute mayhem. There's plenty of choice with the latest releases as well as games, puzzles and toys. On Monday, 5th December, we will be kicking off our extended trading hours:



Monday-Friday
8.30am-6pm
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8.30am-8pm
Saturday 24th Dec
8.30am-4pm
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all our wonderful customers for their ongoing support throughout the year and wish you a most wonderful festive season. Stay well, enjoy the holidays and happy reading to everyone. ✨

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Time to volunteer

Janice Creenaune meets Prue Watson, a Wombarra local, who has spent much of her life volunteering. Prue now dedicates herself to co-ordinating various volunteer groups in the Northern Illawarra

Prue Watson, even at 78, is not about to stop volunteering. She has spent her life assisting others and now continues her practice in local concerns.

Prue completed a visual arts degree and a Dip Ed at Alexander Mackie Art School in Sydney. In her working life, Prue had various educational roles and for the last 15 years of her working life she was Hazel Hawke's personal assistant. Prue also supervised volunteers at the Art Gallery of NSW.

She understands the joy and the necessity of volunteering. "We are building a community together, that's why we all volunteer. There is a drive to work alongside others that certainly keeps me engaged and connected in the community."

Prue has spent much of her married life moving because of her husband's work – Brisbane, Sydney, Tasmania, Perth, the US twice and Paris – but she found beauty and a community in Wombarra when she moved here in 1994 and has dedicated much of her time to volunteering ever since.

Prue co-ordinates The Friends of Scarborough/Wombarra Cemetery Group. "Initially we encouraged Council to stop mowing the kangaroo grass on the northern boundary of the cemetery which has made a comeback. We weeded and planted a scented garden ... and continue to keep on top of fire weed and other invasive species.

"A key factor in the success of the group is our having a good working relationship with Wollongong City Council (WCC) who respect and value the efforts of volunteers," Prue says.

"The local Wombarra Pool Bushcare Group originally worked under the State Land Care program 30 years ago, replacing the kikuyu grass with native vegetation on the headland from the cemetery down to the pool.

"The group was inactive for many years but came together again in 2013 under WCC Bushcare program when there was some illegal slashing of plants. We weeded, planted, mulched the site, maintaining the bio-diversity of the area for the native birds and animals."

Prue says "a few very dedicated workers" took on recent erosion problems caused by heavy rain.

"Local groups bring people together from all walks of life.

"The litter project, Rise and Shine, was another Council-led program where local groups throughout the Illawarra took on clearing up their environments. We had extra bins provided in the cemetery and at Wombarra Pool picnic area. We rarely have a problem with litter now."

Prue supported local artists as Events Coordinator at The Clifton School of Arts (CSA) and was a committee member for several years.

"The CSA committee are all local volunteers who have creative arts, business or academic backgrounds. We are looking for new volunteers who have a passion and some skills to share."

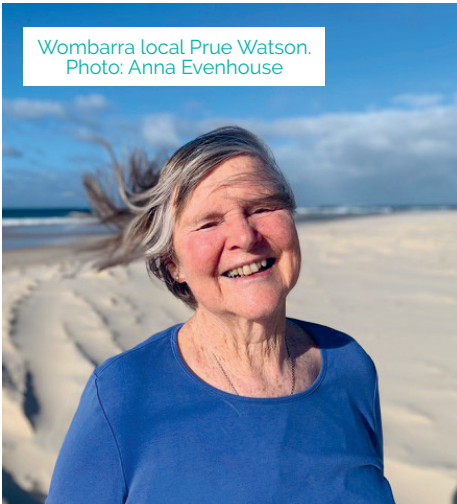
The CSA has grown in recent years and the "strong community" of filmmakers, photographers and artists hold workshops "to enrich our community's creative experience".

"We also work very closely with the South Coast Writers Centre with various talks ... as fundraisers for the CSA."

Prue says: "I strongly believe that working together develops strong relationships and builds respect in a community."

It is through the work of Prue Watson, and the many local volunteers like her, that our communities grow and build for a better future.

Wombarra local Prue Watson.
Photo: Anna Evenhouse



Janice Creenaune is a volunteer for PKD (Polycystic Kidney Disease) Foundation Australia. Email janicecreenaune@gmail.com 🌻



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Raiders of the Lost Land





Cover
feature

For this year's Christmas panto, Stanwell Park Arts Theatre (SPAT) presents an archaeological adventure with a feminist twist. Bethan Farmer reports

This December Stanwell Park audiences are in for a treat with the return of SPAT's traditional Christmas Panto to the CWA Hall after a three-year hiatus.

Montana Smith and the Raiders of the Lost Land is a rip-roaring, globe-trotting adventure ride featuring a cavalcade of colourful characters, stunning sustainable sets, vicious vile villains, huge-hearted heroes, and a nitpicking narrator with an appetite for annoying alliteration.

We dug deep with lead actors Adam Wade (Montana Smith) and Emma Reid (Gail Friday):

For the uninitiated, what is Panto?

Emma: It's a melodramatic take on a comedy play, with lots more audience interaction.

Adam: A very silly play where you get to shout at actors who have worked hard and see if you can get them to forget their lines. The kids will get a laugh at me falling over and the parents will get a laugh for reasons they'll have to lie about to their kids.

I've heard pantos have audience involvement – what does that mean?

Emma: We are trying to solve a mystery and need help from the audience to work out the clues – so please call out to us if you can help! Don't forget to 'boo' the baddies and 'cheer' for the goodies!

Adam: People get to shout "It's behind you!", "Oh no, you're not! / Oh yes, you are" when the opportunity comes up. If you want to try to throw me off by yelling out at me – please don't. I will not resist improvising and our director Kelly will kill me if this panto ends up becoming a play about *Star Wars*.

What is special about this year's show?

Emma: It was written by two fabulous local women (Kelly-Maree Michael and Bernadette LeMesurier) and is witty and fun. There are lots of old movie references and jokes that the grown-up audience will recognise, plus plenty of utter silliness to entertain the younger audience.

Adam: There is a huge amount of enthusiasm and talent going into all aspects of the production. The protagonist (me) is unusually flawed and



Lead actors Emma Reid (Gail Friday) and Adam Wade (Montana Smith). Photos: Anthony Warry

hilarious, which persuaded me to not play the villain this time around.

Tell us about your character.

Emma: Despite what Monty might think, Gail is THE BEST archaeologist in Australia! She’s clever, hard-working, a bit serious, loyal and pretty fed-up with being mistaken as a medical doctor!

Adam: Despite what Gail might think, Monty isn’t THE BEST archaeologist in Australia! He’s a nut, and a loaded cannon that audiences will get a laugh out of and won’t know when to take cover.

Who do you think you are most like in real life, Monty or Gail?

Emma: Definitely Gail! She’s a bit of a nerdy goody-goody and so am I!

Adam: In. Every. Aspect: Monty. I’m unashamedly proud and expressive on and off the

stage – that can sometimes both work for and against me. On the front cover of my script where it says ‘Role’, I wrote ‘THE STAR.’ So I’m basically playing myself.

What’s your favourite line?

Emma: There are so many funny lines in the play, and I do love a good dirty joke, so it’s hard to pick a favourite. When Monty thinks that his manhood might be cut off is delivered so well by Adam – his talent for physical comedy is incredible!

Adam: When the Narrator is talking about a saucy pop-up book Monty has: “I bet it caused something else to pop-up.”

It’s been said that you should never work with children or animals, yet this show has a chorus of 20 kids and, I believe, a pantomime camel – what’s that been like?

SPAT's Lucy Morgan as Victoria Secret and Taylor Cobb as Byron Bae



Emma: Hectic! Ever since I saw my first SPAT panto, I knew I wanted to perform in one alongside my son, James, one day. I'm thrilled to have that opportunity this year.

Adam: The theatre's for everyone, especially kids. If you want to ensure a future generation of talented actors, they need these opportunities to grow, even if it just makes them a more outgoing and expressive person (I should know). These kids have shown they've got amazing potential as actors, and I hope they see it through in future years.

Tell us a funny story from the rehearsal process.

Emma: My darling husband Patrick has been working hard to 3D print many of the props for the show. One of them only lasted one scene after an overly exuberant "Monty moment" – sorry, honey!

Adam: Hey. It's hard learning 200+ lines so I

roughly ad lib them on the go. One time I was meant to say something along the lines of "Byron and I will be camping in the tent, getting in with nature and fishing with our hands", but I ended up saying "Byron, I will be doing it hard in the tent!"

Montana Smith and the Raiders of the Lost Land has performances at Stanwell Park CWA Hall every Friday (7.30pm), Saturday (7.30pm) and Sunday (2pm – great for younger kids!) from 2-18 December.

For tickets and more information on accessibility go to spat.org.au. Tickets cost \$20 (Adult 17+), \$15 (Concession) and \$55 (Family 2A, 3C). They sell out fast so don't delay! ✨

NF 1 report

By Neighbourhood Forum 1 convenor Warwick Erwin

Tree Management Policy and Development Control Plan Chapter Review

Council has reviewed policy and planning controls for tree management and is inviting residents' feedback. Council has a long-term plan in place called the Urban Greening Strategy 2017-2027. Three policies are being brought in to one Tree Management Policy. Paul Tracy, WCC Manager Open Space & Environment Services, told the forum that one policy will make it easier for residents to understand and Council to implement. Included will be lifting the height of a tree that requires Council permission to cut down, increasing the tree canopy in urban areas, vandalism response and increasing the trees in parks. He will develop some options for the forum on the memorial trees in Charles Harper Park.

Climate Change Mitigation Plan (CCMP)

Council aims to reach net zero emissions by 2030 and the LGA by 2050. WCC Sustainability Project Support Office Mick Golding discussed Council's plans and answered a number of forum members' questions. Council's target to have all passenger-fleet electric vehicles is a big challenge. Remondis will trial an electric truck within 12 months.

Go to our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au and scroll down to the projects open for feedback to see the above projects and have your say on them.

Helensburgh Cemetery

Council has completed work at the cemetery, which should have repaired recent wet-weather damage, but downstream neighbours have

complained about an increase in stormwater run-off on their properties. This has been referred to Council. Please report any issues or damage to Council on 4227 7111 as soon as you see it.

Streets without Curb and Cutter in 2508

NF1 is initiating a project to list all the streets in the 2508 urban areas that do not have curb and gutters. One member has started the project with a list of streets and that will continue. The goal is to ask Council to provide a schedule of when curb and gutters will be done. During the start of this project, it has been discovered that developments in some streets have been completed without curb, gutters and footpaths. More to come on this.

Coal Skips in Charles Harper Park

Yes, Council removed the coal skips before the bike race claiming they were dangerous. Helensburgh Lions Club has worked hard to have two replacement skips put in the location. Council is the delaying factor and is now only willing to lay a concrete slab for replacement rails and skips and not provide any weather protection. It appears the old skips were damaged by weather and the shelter that was there was provided by the Lions Club. Council needs to do a lot better with our history.

NF1 Officers

NF1 Officers for another two years are Warwick Erwin, convenor, and Jenny Sherratt, co-convenor.

NF1 will next meet at Otford Community Hall on Wednesday, 8 February 2023 📍

We made it!

By Paul Blanksby of Helensburgh Men's Shed



This is a "thank you" story, because without "thank you" there would be no Men's Shed serving the 2508 Community. For keeping the Shed running strongly, our Committee deserves thanks. And for bringing in life, fun, dad jokes and fellowship, thank you to our members. For being

a generous and understanding landlord, thank you to Alan Blackwell and his family.

To our major sponsors, Hope Church, Helensburgh Anglican, Peabody Colliery, The Top's Conference Centre, Johnny's Tyres, John Hines Mechanical Services, Ray from Razamataz Car Cleaning, Equilibrium Healthcare, Gary Laker, Newstart Building, Raine & Horne, and Handyman Timbers – thank you!

And to all our customers for trusting us with their big or little jobs, their ideas and dreams that we've worked on, for purchasing our products through the year and at our Open Day, for the interesting commissions the Shed has carried out – thank you!

I thought we could finish the year with this little girl holding spring flowers and a simple wooden cross. Have a safe, happy and blessed Christmas.

Visit helensburghmensshed.org.au 📍



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Your Letters

Get Serious about Unregistered Motorbikes

When are the police and/or council going to get serious about cracking down on unregistered motorbikes tearing around Helensburgh?

This occurs on our street, throughout the suburb, at times straight up the main street past Coles in broad daylight, at high speed, often practising wheelies as they overtake cars. There is a complete and utter disregard for the safety of others. These are not isolated incidents, they occur daily, after 4pm right up to and often after dark (without headlights).

I have witnessed many near misses involving children and unregistered bikes hooning around blind corners. What sort of event is it going to need for this issue to get the attention it deserves?

– *Luke Purchase, Helensburgh*

Speculating the land

It is interesting, or alarming that people are buying blocks of land in what is known as the Land Pooling Area of Helensburgh. I have written to the NSW Government, via our Local Member, Lee Evans, to ask the Premier what he thinks should be done with this “speculated” land once and for all.

This has gone on for the last 4 decades!
– *Alan Bond* ✨



Grandparents Day delights

By teacher Megan Sida

Throughout this term there have been many varied and exciting events taking place at Helensburgh Public School. Our school community celebrated Grandparents Day with K-2 and 3-6 assemblies and open classroom sessions.

It was fantastic to see the students performing in front of their grandparents or family members and sharing their classroom learning.

Our new enrolments for Kindergarten 2023 visited their new school over three Friday mornings. Teachers were greeted by happy, excited children who had a great time doing play-based learning in the classroom and making new friends while parents were provided a school information session in the hall.

All students have also participated in the fabulous Gumaraa Aboriginal Education Incurson and weekly gymnastics lessons. Stage 3 students were also involved in Dance to Be Fit and a fantastic visit from Saya Sakakibara. Saya is an ex-Helensburgh Public School student, a professional BMX race athlete and 2020 Tokyo Olympian. She is a well-respected member of the Helensburgh community and she discussed her journey as an international athlete as well as talking about doing your best. ✨



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Meet a councillor

Journalist Brian Kelly interviews David Brown, a Labor councillor for Ward 2, which covers the central part of Wollongong, including the city centre



Ward 2's David Brown. Photo: Wollongong City Council

In a pinch, David Brown was the go-to guy in his Wollongong High School rugby league team. Skinny as all get-up and the fastest runner over 50 yards, a teammate recalled.

“Our team played exclusively in our own half. ‘Give it to Brownie’ was our only attacking strategy as nobody else could run to the tryline,” the source said.

Times have changed, but as one of Wollongong’s most experienced councillors, Brown is unlikely to drop the ball. He still misses the Illawarra Steelers (“14 years without a loss!”) and even couches his Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) experience in footy terms.

He was all set to “come off the bench” and give evidence (for ICAC) but was not called up.

Several Labor councillors were embroiled in the infamous sex-for-development scandal which began in 2006 and during which ICAC investigations uncovered “a culture of corruption” at the council.

The ICAC episode more than a decade ago was a challenging one for Brown, who along with Janice Kershaw, was the only ALP councillor returned, having faced ongoing innuendo while trying to win back community faith.

“It was terrible,” he said. “People assumed things. I didn’t know anything about it. I think I was the only person who actually wanted to get before ICAC to state my case!

“After that, we [as councillors] knew we had to cooperate to bring the community back on board. We’re amazingly collegiate now – have been for the past decade. People from outside the area want to come and work here; they know that we’re trying to work together.

“Sometimes there’ll be a few strident debates on things but, where possible, we meet in the middle. If someone comes up with a good idea, you don’t block it just because they moved it.”

So is there a place for party politics at council level? “The voters think so,” says Brown, pointing out the last council had two independents as opposed to one this time.

“Everyone has a political view of the world,” he says. “There’s politics in your local stamp club.”

Brown says council changed its political dynamics after the dismissal of 2008. Whereas beforehand, it was usually half a dozen Labor councillors and the rest independent, both Liberals and Greens gained representation afterward.

Helping create a community centre in the CBD is on his radar – to bring together disparate groups in modern, better facilities, as has been achieved in Dapto, Corrimal and Thirroul centres.

When it comes to high-rise, elevating the city’s skyline is a necessary part of growth, Brown says. “Wollongong grows at roughly the national average – slightly under 1 per cent – so that’s 2200 people we have to find homes for this year, next year and after that.

“My reading is that people don’t want flats for no good reason in the suburbs; they’re quite happy to see it in the CBD where you should have big buildings.”

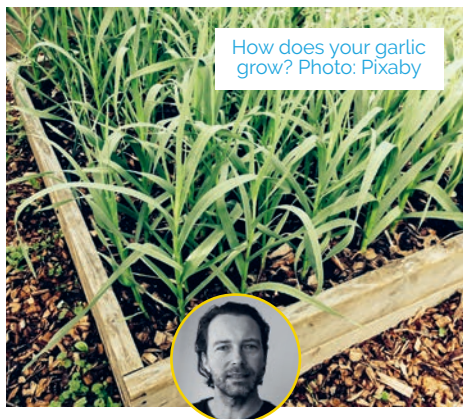
Brown had a shot at the mayor’s job two terms ago and came second, answering “Not really” when asked if further ambition lies in that chair.

A media consultant/editor who worked as an advisor for former federal Speaker of the House Steve Martin in the ‘90s after journalism stints at the *Illawarra Mercury* and in England, he likes to get to a few Dragons rugby league games and Illawarra Hawks basketball matches when he’s not chasing fish off Coniston Beach. 🍷

NSW Justices Association Wollongong Branch provides free JP services at Community Desks at Thirroul, Corrimal, Wollongong and Dapto libraries.

All services given by JPs are free of charge. They cannot give legal advice and there are certain forms and documents that they are unable to sign or witness, but they can assist you in finding where these can be dealt with.

For more info contact Ray Vaughan on 0419 293 524. 🍷



How does your garlic grow? Photo: Pixabay

Sustainability goals in a cost-of-living crisis

By architect Ben Wollen

When I graduated from Architecture School in 2008, our lecturers warned us of the dire nature of the last recession in the 90s and how jobs were few and far between. They told us to prepare for a weak employment market and perhaps take a year off to travel the world and allow things to recover. How wrong they were! Australia sidestepped that recession and there was plenty of work available.

We now find ourselves in a very different set of economic conditions and, whilst we are all hoping that somehow we can dodge a recession, the clear and present danger is inflation and its effect on the increasing cost of living. It was a welcome announcement that the government is investing in affordable housing. Surely, this is the one big issue facing many people as rents and mortgages keep climbing. The problem at the moment is you can't build new houses as fast as people move into them.

Affordable housing needs to be consistently on the agenda – in my opinion, it's one of the most important issues of our time. When people don't have secure housing, you get all sorts of social and health issues stemming from this failure. This is firmly in the government's lap. Whilst there are private organisations tackling the issue as well, there need to be more incentives and more budget allocated to increase the supply.

Affordable housing also needs to be sustainably designed housing; it can't be project homes at the outskirts of cities, robbing valuable farming land and not well connected by public transport. This disastrous style of housing continues to this day and every time I drive past one I shake my head!

Okay, enough ranting – what are three ways we can balance the sustainability goals of the

aforementioned affordable housing – or for any house, for that matter!

1. Reducing heating/cooling loads – This one has to be on top of the list. It seems every day the news is scaring us into skyrocketing energy prices. Whilst we can only hope for some government intervention so that we're not buying Aussie fuel at international prices, what we can control is our use of energy. Apart from wearing ski gear inside in winter, and drinking ice water semi-naked in summer, our homes need to work harder.

Insulation is an obvious one. And not just the bare minimum of insulation – the best and highest value insulation needs to be installed. The good thing is, insulation is pretty cheap and you can buy Aussie made – win-win!

For those of you who have old homes with insulation-less walls, there are ways to get it into them without having to rip off the cladding.

For those of you who rent, have a nice chat with your landlord and tell them how putting insulation in the walls would be a good human-saving thing to do.

2. Electrify/Solarfy – I just made up the word “solarfy”, but you know what I mean: solar panels! I kinda feel these should be mandatory on all new builds with good solar access, and maybe one day this will happen (maybe after the inflation crisis). Most of you will know about Electrify 2515. If we can get our energy from the sun to power our home appliances, hot water and vehicles, it means less reliance on fossil fuels and therefore reducing costs in the long term. And, whilst there's been a recent uptick in the costs of solar panels, the long-term trend is for them to get cheaper and more efficient. Hopefully, this also works for batteries!

3. Grow your own food – Even if this is a herb garden on a balcony. Can you imagine if everyone grew their own herbs, that would be saving the farm-vehicle energy, the transport energy, the fridge-in-the-supermarket energy and the energy to go to your supermarket and then store your fresh produce in your fridge. Times that by about eight billion people and those are significant energy and money savings. Apologies to all you herb farmers out there, I'm just using you as an example.

I could add a bunch more ways to balance architectural sustainability goals in a cost-of-living crisis, things such as double-glazing, building orientation, window shading, thermal mass, light-coloured roofs, and locally sourced materials, especially timber. Actually the irony is in the title, because the more sustainable we become, so too does our cost of living.

Perhaps the title should have been – How to beat a cost-of-living crisis with sustainability goals. Take that, Inflation Dragon! 🐉

Artists of the Illawarra

Painter Edith McNally introduces Bernardette Camenzuli

Bernardette is a multi-disciplinary artist, who incorporates painting, drawing, sculpture and photography to create themed bodies of work that respond to and reflect on emotional sentiments and the environment.



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Bernardette recently participated as one of the artists in the inaugural Northern Illawarra Art Trail (NIAT). She contributed her graphic design skills toward designing the banners displayed outside each artist's studio. The banner concept is a stylised aerial representation of the spectacular Northern Illawarra, where the bush embraces the sand, surf and ocean. The design works in harmony with the logo by fellow NIAT artist and author Jo Oliver. ✨

Bernardette began her tertiary art studies at the Malta School of Art, Europe and completed a Master of Art degree at the UNSW College of Fine Arts. She has participated in several group shows in Malta and Australia. Before moving to Australia, Bernardette lived in the culturally rich island of Malta, and participated as an onsite artist during the annual cultural 'Notte Bianca' (White Night) event in Malta's capital, Valletta.

Now the natural beauty of the Northern Illawarra provides inspiration for her work.

During her career as a corporate in-house graphic designer in Malta, Bernardette was responsible for the design and project management of publications and promotional material to mark the restoration of the 1659 Baroque painting *The Martyrdom of St Catherine* by Mattia Preti.

In Australia, Bernardette has been an active art guide at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery. She recently set up Biz Studio – visit biz-studio.com.au – which



Christmas pups for life

Sonia (Gregson) Says: dogs are more than a gift – they're family

Bringing home a new puppy is an exciting time regardless of the time of year. Here are a few tips to help your new puppy settle in.

Set up a Safe Space or 'Zen Den'

When family or visitors come over for Christmas celebrations your puppy will need a safe space. It also helps with reducing toileting accidents,

chewing on inappropriate items and a place to rest away from the party.

The 'zen den' can be a crate, bed or kennel. Train your puppy to enjoy being in this safe space. Never use this space as a "time out" or for any negative consequences.

- Add a source of warmth (warm not hot) – be careful of puppies who chew through anything. Wheat or barley bags are safest.
- Create a surrogate sibling using a soft toy (sometimes with a heartbeat) – again if this has batteries be mindful of dogs who chew through anything.
- When using a crate, cover one end so it is dark.
- Add an old t-shirt that has been worn by a family member.
- Smells that soothe dogs – vanilla, ginger, coconut, and valerian.
- Adaptil spray – a synthetic pheromone.
- Play some sleepy classical music on low volume.

Dog trainer Sonia Gregson runs *Sonia Says Sit*, which has a Training Centre in Helensburgh and teaches puppy preschool at veterinary hospitals in Austinmer and Bulli. Visit www.soniasaysit.com ✨



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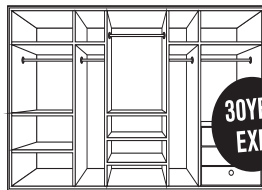
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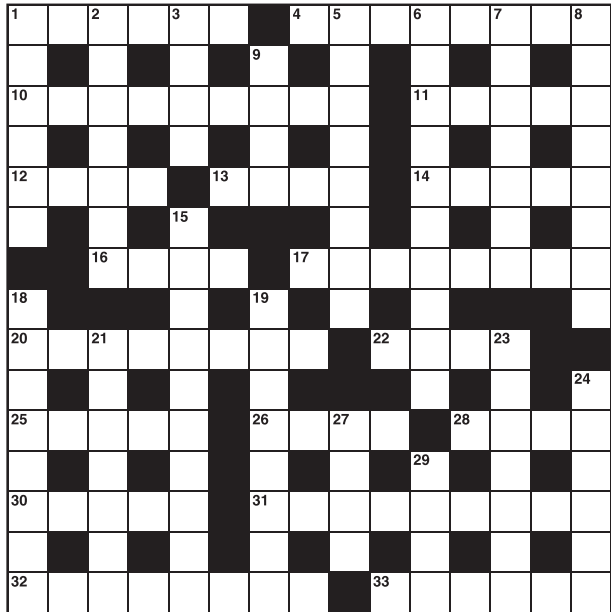
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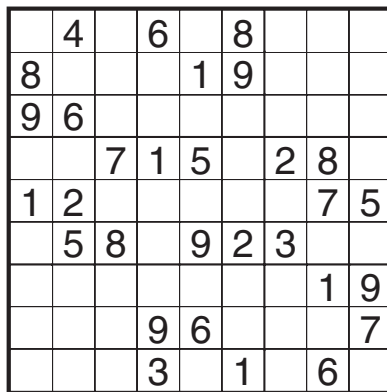
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- 17 Flower merchants (8)
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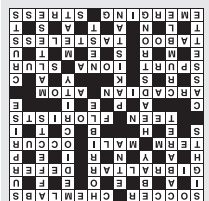
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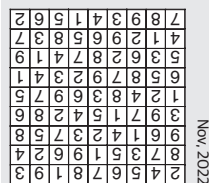


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SUDOKU



Nov. 2022



Gift buyer, beware

By Tony Ryan

As this fine publication arrives in your letterbox, for the last time this year, it begins the countdown to Christmas.

It's time for alcohol-fuelled work Christmas parties, to tell your boss or your 'crush' what you really think of them (no doubt these have ramifications in the new year), for family gatherings (and pretending you really do like each other). But it is also time to buy Christmas presents. So, I'd like to share some shopping tips for the blokes who by and large do not excel in this department.

There is nothing wrong with leaving the shopping until Christmas Eve. It adds to the thrill and excitement of the last-minute rush. But, like me, you may find it does not always work out.

When I was younger, I used to buy all my family presents from K-Mart and myself things from Myer (when they were 'the' store) and keep the bags. On Christmas Day, under the pretence of being environmentally aware, without wrapping paper, I would hand out all the cheap gifts from the Myer bag. Maybe, if I'd bought something on a really good special, I'd tear off the special tag and 'accidentally' leave a tag with the original price on it. Once I got married, I was told that these types of practices were no longer tolerated.

Re-gifting from last year. Getting crap presents is part of the deal and you have to "Madagascar penguin" up, so smile and wave. But it is what you do with the present that counts. We all have a relative or an in-law who we are not that keen on. Just regift the crap presents. And there is nothing

wrong with giving them back the crap present they gave you the year before.

You can ask your women friends or work colleagues to help shop for your partner. But this comes with its own danger. Sure, it takes the guesswork out of the process, but they also like to spend large as it is not their money. I would always hear the line "she has to put up with you, so you need to pony up and pony up huge"! Also, my wife would often thank the girls I work with for her presents, despite me pleading my case.

Please note: if you request the presents, you must use them for their designed purpose. Last year this young lady rolled up at work in all-new active wear as we waited for a lift. After about 90 seconds, the lift arrived and she went up ONE floor!

You also have to make sure that you do not take other people's presents and use them yourself. Like the time I was at the gym and a few of the young ones (young for me is anyone under 35) were kinda looking at me. Then I realised that I had taken my daughter's "One Direction" beach towel to the gym. I did try to explain that the towel was not mine, even though Harry is my fav.

I would like to thank Gen and Marcus for having the courage to produce this local magazine in these trying times and for wanting to publish my silly little stories. To the 000's of people who stop me in the street and say how much they like my articles, I thank you. Oops, I think I added a couple of zeros. I hope you and your families have a jolly good Christmas. ✨

Return of the Folk Fest



Dear Violet are one of the local acts appearing. Photo supplied

Fans both ardent and casual will be thrilled. Not just because the Illawarra Folk Festival has announced its 2023 line-up, but that the event which has got our toes tapping for nearly 40 years is happening at all.

Sixty-four acts will light up five stages across three days from January 20 to 22, and Illawarra artists are again a major focal point, while acts from elsewhere also play a large part in creating the festival's sense of occasion.

Look out for a story in our January edition, and in the meantime, find a full program, volunteering details and tickets online.

Visit www.illawarrafolkfestival.com.au ✨

Share the stoke in Thirroul

By Sarah Forest, a French student interning with Surfrider South Coast

To wrap up 2022, the Surfrider South Coast team are joining the incredible volunteers from the Disabled Surfers Association South Coast at Thirroul Beach on Saturday, December 3 at 9am.

We are asking all of our readers and ocean-loving community to come and give a hand to share the stoke, and surf with people of all abilities. We need your help to make this day great for those who don't normally get into the surf.

As a part of the day's events, we will be running a beach clean to celebrate Ocean Care Day.

Students from the University of Wollongong will be conducting a micro-plastic beach analysis on the day as a part of our regular beach clean.

Come and join us at Thirroul beach. This could be the most rewarding day you'll ever spend at the beach and in the surf.

Call for policy change after REDcycle failure

The collapse of the REDcycle soft plastic recycling scheme has left shoppers bewildered and millions of plastic bags stored in warehouses, but on a positive note, it has made many people rethink their relationship with plastic packaging.

The responsibility to protect the environment should not be placed solely on the individual, nor should the onus be on the shopper to find



alternatives to plastic when the majority of foods available for purchase come packaged in plastic.

The majority of Australians agree that in order to create a cleaner future we should recycle, however, the government and industry should support the community by creating adequate opportunities and enforcing mandatory recycled content laws.

Because plastic is produced from byproducts of the gas and oil extraction, it's a huge money spinner for the fossil fuel industry. The fossil fuel corporations and plastic producers must be taxed so high that it's not profitable to produce unnecessary plastics but, most importantly, they should be forced to take back all of their plastic waste and made to 'recycle' it effectively.

All governments must put a value on the price of plastic waste and rewrite policies to protect nature and us. A truly circular economy would have the producers, who make the plastic, take it back.

Effective recycling would mean that our plastic garbage would have a value, instead of being garbage. We have to start demanding governmental policy change, stop buying stuff wrapped in plastic and, whenever you can, REFUSE plastic.

Facebook at '[Surfrider Foundation – South Coast](#)' or Instagram [@surfrider_southcoast](#) 🌟

Great Guide Zoo Snooze

By Liana, age 11



On 26 August, the Great Guide Zoo Snooze began. First, we caught the train to the city. There was myself and four other girls from the Menai Girl Guides Unit and, after about half an hour, the Lugarno Guides Unit also joined us on the train. From the train we took the ferry over to Taronga Zoo. That's when the fun began!

Once we got to the zoo we waited and waited until we got called to walk to the place we were camping. After we set up our camp, it was time to wait again. After that we had dinner, a dance party (that went on for ages). After the party, we watched a movie which was animal themed. The movie was called *The Lion King*. It was a good movie, but it started raining and we all got wet.

During the night it was still raining and some of the girls got really wet and didn't have spare clothes, so I had to lend clothes to other Guides. In the morning we all packed up and walked around the zoo. Next, we ate lunch, then around the zoo some more. Finally, we took the train back. It was a really fun experience. 🌟



Join the Pony Club

Committee member Pamela Cook shared the club's story with Kasey Simpson

Helensburgh Pony Club is one of the oldest clubs in the Illawarra and has provided instruction and sporting events for generations of riders. At the height of our membership there were over 100 junior riders attending monthly rally days, gymkhanas, sporting and jumping competitions and representing the club and zone at State level.

Over the last five years the number of riders at all clubs has decreased, which has seen our number of junior riders reduce to very low levels.

Fortunately, Pony Club NSW now allows adult membership and it's been wonderful to see our numbers growing again with local adult riders coming along to ride together, receive instruction and generally have a great time with their horses.

Helensburgh Pony Club is having a membership drive to keep the club running and financial. Along with the number of declining riders, Covid and then the wet weather has made it extremely difficult to run consistent events but we're hoping that period has now come to an end.

Members have full use of the grounds and access to equipment, including a fantastic set of professional jumps, as well as monthly rally days – some with instruction and some for a social ride.

Horse riding has many benefits. Bringing your horse to the grounds and competing in a variety of events allows riders the opportunity to improve their existing skills and learn new ones, to connect with their horse and allow the horse to experience a new environment. It also means taking on responsibility for your horse, being assertive with your horse, both on the ground and in the saddle, along with the exercise benefits for both rider and horse.

On the social level, riders make so many new friends across all age groups which extend beyond riding days.

Check out Helensburgh Pony Club on Facebook or email hbpccsec@gmail.com ✨

Welcome salmon

By 'Hello Fish' columnist Duncan Leadbitter

One of the first signs that summer is on its way is the annual migration run of the salmon. Large schools gather at the southern end of Stanwell Park (and many other beaches) as they nervously make the dash north, seeking to avoid predators such as dolphins, seals, sharks and, of course, humans.

The Australian salmon (*Arripis trutta*) is no relation to its better-known namesake found in supermarkets and restaurants all over the country. It carries the name 'salmon' because it looks like its European namesake (Atlantic salmon – *Salmo salar*). However, it is not even a distant cousin in taxonomic terms.

Australian salmon has never been highly valued as a food fish. Many years ago, Australians preferred fish that had a very mild flavour and salmon tastes like, well, fish. As a result fishermen did not look after it and the quality suffered, so people turned their noses up even more. There was a cannery in Eden many years ago, but this closed and most now goes for bait, although many different ethnic groups make use of it.

However, properly looked after (killed quickly and iced) Australian salmon is a good tasting fish. I make a ceviche (raw pieces marinated in lime juice) when I catch one and it also smokes well. I have spoken to chefs who have used it for sashimi, but sourcing well-handled fish is a challenge.

Viewed from Bald Hill the schools look like black clouds. While commonly called 'bait balls', the salmon themselves are also fierce predators, eating a wide variety of small fish such as sprats, anchovies and sardines. The schools change in shape, sometimes split and then rejoin. They are quite mesmerising to watch.

Maybe we should celebrate the arrival of the salmon each year. They connect the Illawarra with the South Coast and Sydney Metro. They also connect the Yuin, Dharawal and Eora nations, and maybe more. ✨



Be a Savvy Survivor for SCARF

By Cristina Sacco of SCARF Refugee Support



SCARF by MCCI has been selected by Savvy Fitness as the charity for the Maguire and McInerney Savvy Survivor in Wollongong from 11 to 17 December 2022.

The seven-day team charity event is about teamwork, fun and participation. Savvy Survivor promotes physical activity, healthy hearts and supportive environments. Now in its 25th season, Savvy Survivor has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for local charities.

“The money raised will go directly to our refugee support programs, but more than that, Savvy Survivor will bring an awareness to the local community of the issues facing humanitarian

refugee entrants,” says executive operations manager Sarah Wilson, from the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra (MCCI).

Here is how your donation can make a difference:

- \$25 refurbishes and rehomes a digital device
- \$50 helps community members practise their English, make new friends and connect through Let’s Chat
- \$75 helps an individual apply and prepare for the citizenship test
- \$100 assists a student receive one-on-one educational support for the school term.

Emily, a veteran of Savvy Survivor and an MCCI employee who will be taking part again this year, says: “It’s one of my favourite events of the year. It’s a week filled with my favourite things, fitness, friendship, fun and funding a worthy charity.

“It’s a community focused event with the right amount of competition. I love that everyone can work at their own pace. This 50-year-old will probably go a little slower this year.”

From 11-17 December people will complete as many sessions as possible.

You can support Emily’s team here:
savvysurvivor.raisedby.com 🌟

Presentation party at Beaches

Ian Pepper reports

We wrapped up another great year for the club on November 6 with sunshine and small waves at Sharky Beach while the Micro Groms battled it out at Coledale. Congrats to Nic Squiers on taking out the A Grade in the last pointscore for 2022 and Zahlia Short for winning the Open Women’s.

Good to see a few of the juniors brought along some clippers to create some creative head shaves in support of the Banyard family.

Last few events for the year coming up before our presentation were:

- South Coast Boardriders Team Challenge at Shellharbour, 19 Nov
- 2022 Australian Boardriders Battle Regional Qualifier at Kiama, 26 November

Finally, don’t forget 2022 presentation @ Beaches Hotel – Saturday, December 3 with guest band Zion playing and Blink182 Show afterwards. 🌟



Boardriders shaved their heads last month in support of the Banyard family who have launched a public appeal to help their daughter, Maggie, who has acute myeloid leukemia. Go to match4maggie.com

Golf news

Tradies Social Golf

Barry Thompson reports

Tung Nguyen (20) led the field home with a 61, followed by Ivan McMillan and Jerry Reilly, both 23, with a 64 and a 67. These members share the Helensburgh Butchery and Gallardo's Pizzeria prizes and Roger Hendry will no doubt benefit from claiming the Helensburgh Driving Range voucher.

The conditions were ideal, and it was good to see favourable shifts allowed Greg Bell and Jim Hawley to join us on the paddock.

We were playing the last round of the championships and we now wait with bated breath for the results.

The Gold Jacket tour was finally held after cancellation, and I am told that Ivan is a picture of sartorial splendour in said garment.

By the time of publication our season will be ended, hopefully with a win to the Down Towners and a successful Loud Shirt/Charity Day in aid of NINA.

It has been another difficult year and we extend our thanks to our committee for their efforts in providing us with an enjoyable season.

I wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please support our sponsors over the break.

Watch for our 2023 Calendar and see you on the course. ✨

Helensburgh Sunday Social Golf Club

Robert 'Indy' Jones reports

The HSSGC most recent event took place at Campbelltown on November 20th. It will be closely followed by Kareela on December 4th.

Updates to members via email and contact Tony on 0418 863 100 for membership information.

Dates for early 2023 will be forthcoming in our December report which is published in the January issue.

Please continue to support our sponsors Christian's Premium Meats and Helensburgh Golf Range and other local businesses that support the local community. Back on course, join us to enjoy a game of golf, the outdoors and good company.

To members, family and friends, despite a disrupted golfing year, best wishes for 2023 as we farewell 2022. Stay safe and healthy whilst enjoying the festive season.

Indy signing off...

Golf can best be defined as an endless series of tragedies obscured by the occasional miracle. ✨

Huge support for Animal Rescue DA

Flame staff report

A Helensburgh animal rescue service, Country Companion Animal Rescue (CCAR), has received overwhelming support online for a Development Application to add to its existing facilities.

The DA includes provision for two more kennels and dog exercise yards, as well as an amendment to current conditions in order to increase the number of dogs able to be boarded on the site.

CCAR's Julie-ann Ehrlich has been rescuing animals for 20 years and, in that time, she has been responsible for rescuing and rehoming countless animals.

And Illawarra locals have thrown their full support behind Julie-ann as evidenced by numerous online comments to Wollongong City Council about the DA. Below is a small selection of those positive comments ...

Paul Johns wrote: "These people do fantastic work. The care of these animals is a 24/7 job which is testament to their dedication and commitment. Without them these animals would stand little to no chance of living a happy and healthy life. Please let them carry on with their incredible work."

Natasha Watson commented: "An organisation that does an amazing & essential job in rescuing and re-homing animals – with no environmental or negative social impact."

Erin Smith wrote: "CCAR do amazing work rescuing and rehoming animals that would otherwise be killed. Please approve this request so they can continue their good work." ✨

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Port Kembla Tidal Chart

December 2022

TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M
1	0343 1.25 0911 0.64 TH 1530 1.54 ● 2223 0.32	10	0337 0.56 1015 1.73 SA 1706 0.34 2301 1.16	19	0533 1.43 1149 0.61 MO 1735 1.28 2343 0.42	28	0110 1.28 0638 0.51 WE 1302 1.77 1958 0.23
2	0443 1.32 1027 0.62 FR 1637 1.46 2313 0.35	11	0415 0.59 1051 1.70 SU 1745 0.36 2342 1.14	20	0619 1.56 1249 0.49 TU 1835 1.28	29	0208 1.29 0741 0.56 TH 1359 1.61 2049 0.31
3	0536 1.41 1138 0.57 SA 1739 1.39 2358 0.37	12	0454 0.62 1129 1.65 MO 1825 0.40	21	0028 0.41 0705 1.69 WE 1345 0.36 1933 1.29	30	0306 1.33 0850 0.61 FR 1459 1.45 ● 2139 0.38
4	0624 1.51 1243 0.51 SU 1834 1.33	13	0025 1.12 0536 0.65 TU 1209 1.59 1907 0.43	22	0114 0.40 0752 1.82 TH 1439 0.24 2030 1.29	31	0404 1.38 1005 0.63 SA 1602 1.31 2227 0.44
5	0038 0.39 0708 1.59 MO 1338 0.45 1926 1.28	14	0112 1.11 0623 0.69 WE 1251 1.53 1953 0.45	23	0202 0.40 0841 1.92 FR 1531 0.15 ● 2126 1.30		
6	0115 0.42 0748 1.66 TU 1426 0.40 2014 1.25	15	0203 1.12 0716 0.72 TH 1338 1.46 2040 0.46	24	0253 0.40 0931 1.99 SA 1624 0.09 2221 1.30		
7	0151 0.46 0826 1.71 WE 1509 0.36 2058 1.22	16	0300 1.16 0819 0.74 FR 1431 1.39 ● 2128 0.46	25	0346 0.41 1023 2.01 SU 1717 0.07 2316 1.29		
8	0226 0.49 0902 1.73 TH 1549 0.33 ○ 2140 1.19	17	0355 1.22 0930 0.74 SA 1531 1.34 2215 0.45	26	0441 0.43 1115 1.98 MO 1811 0.10		
9	0300 0.53 0938 1.74 FR 1628 0.33 2221 1.17	18	0446 1.31 1042 0.69 SU 1633 1.30 2259 0.44	27	0013 1.28 0538 0.46 TU 1208 1.90 1904 0.15		

TIMES AND HEIGHTS OF HIGH AND LOW WATERS
LAT 34° 29'
LONG 150° 55'

MOON PHASE SYMBOLS New Moon ● First Quarter ◐ Full Moon ○ Last Quarter ◑

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