

The Genuine Article



YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER | EDITION TWO - OCTOBER 2013 | FREE!



Representatives from Toastmasters WA accept the President's Distinguished Districts recognition. Photo courtesy of Toastmasters WA.

Make a toast to becoming a confident speaker

• By Greg

"I'm terrified of public speaking", "I have to give a speech at my mate's wedding but I don't know what to say!", "I'm sure I was the perfect candidate for that job, but I just didn't show my best side at the interview because I was too nervous.", "That speech was so boring, every second word was 'um' and ah."

Have you heard people say any of these things? Maybe you have said some of them yourself! You might think the situation is hopeless because there is no help at hand, but there is.

Toastmasters can help you become the fearless speaker you aspire to be!

Toastmasters is an organisation with over eighty years of experience helping people to speak and lead with confidence. Established by Dr Ralph Smedley in the United States in 1924, Toastmasters has grown to a worldwide organisation with over 292,000 members in more than 14,000 clubs in 122 different countries worldwide. In Australia, Toastmasters has a vibrant presence with over 800 clubs and 17,000 members.


The core of Toastmasters is the comprehensive education program,

guided by the philosophy 'you learn by doing'. The program has two tracks designed to build communication and leadership skills. The starting point is the communication track. When you join a Toastmasters club, you don't get a chance to hide! You will immediately be given a speaking role, even if only for one minute. Over time you get the opportunity to build your confidence by completing the Competent Communicator Manual. This manual sounds daunting, but it isn't. You complete ten projects in the manual, each covering different aspects of becoming an effective speak-

er. These include body movements, facial expressions, speech structure, and techniques designed to inspire and persuade an audience.

Each speech is evaluated as you deliver it. Remember, an evaluation is not criticism! At a meeting, other members will listen to your speech and provide constructive feedback. They will highlight what you did well in your speech and what you can do to improve. I've found this to be a great experience, both as a speaker and as an evaluator myself!

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+ ALL THE LATEST IN BOOK, FILM, GAME AND EVENT REVIEWS

What is Community Newspaper? The Community Newspaper program is just one of the ways in which ORS confirms its dedication to helping achieve the vocational goals of our clients. It is designed to help job seekers refine their job search skills, as well as gain confidence and motivation to re-enter the workforce.

Letter from the Editor

Edition two already... Time has flown by! With summer in sight this edition features some great ideas on how to enjoy the Perth sunshine! We have a collection of inspirational creative writing from some of our job seekers as well as several opinion pieces to get you thinking. There are also some very useful tips on how to make your money stretch further.

As always our topic range is broad and diverse, our aim to create a community publication that offers something for everyone. So whether you're looking to be entertained, informed or educated the *Genuine Article* is the newspaper for you!

Thank you to our job seekers for all your hard work this edition.

Jessica

ORS Community Newspaper Coordinator

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What's in your *Genuine Article*?

COMMUNITY NEWS

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Mental health - See the article on page three for a list of the best online resources available for sufferers of depression and anxiety.

RSL - As always we love our not-for-profit features. This edition the Returned Services League of Australia is in the spotlight!

Star gazing - Read all about the Perth Observatory, a unique place for an after dark outing.

FOOD & DINING

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Cooking on a budget - Michele explains how you can cook delicious and healthy meals without breaking the bank.

Green Tea - It might be a strange colour but the health benefits of green tea are incredible!

Brunch in Perth - Too late for breakfast but too early for lunch? Get on the brunch bandwagon! Rosemary has tracked down the best spots for brunch in Perth.

CREATIVE CORNER

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Four seasons - Jeannette's creative description of the changing months.

Personal - A selection of inspirational quotes and thought provoking memoirs

TRAVEL

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From Perth to beyond - If you love to fly check out our feature story on international air travel from Perth, one of the most isolated cities in the world!

Local - This edition we feature the tranquil Margaret River and the beautiful wildflowers found north of the city.

ENTERTAINMENT

P10-11

Soul Sister - Alicia Keys is ready to hit Perth Arena in 2014.

Board games - Tired of Monopoly? Check out Aaron's review of Pandemic.

SPORTS

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A new kind of 'sport' - Vincent looks at the extreme sports that push the limits of human capabilities!

Formula One - Like racing cars? We've got you covered! Navid explains everything you need to know about the current and upcoming F1 seasons.

Alternate occupations - Alternative ways you can get into the sports industry.



the
ORS GROUP

ORS: Occupational Rehabilitation Solutions

We offer a range of services to people seeking work, employers and people who want to improve their work situation. Our focus is on you, whatever you need. With over 20 years of experience, we have the know-how, passion and commitment to get you where you want to be. We empower job seekers to achieve their

goals by connecting them with the best possible employment opportunities; help people who are struggling or have been injured at work find better ways of working or more suited career options; provide training to help individuals improve their skills and knowledge; and work with employers to create safe, supportive and productive workplaces so employees can reach their potential.

The ORS Group started out as a workplace rehabilitation provider, employing just 6 people and focusing only on the needs of the individual. The ORS Group is now a national organisation with over 500 staff and 50 locations across Australia, spanning the following regions: Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

Though we continue to grow, our commitment to our clients remains the same. The ORS Group is focused on empowering people to make decisions to improve their position personally and professionally by providing high-quality service with a passion and dedication that is second to none.

"We are a one stop solution for all of your employment needs"



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RSL fight for our forces



A red poppy sold on 'Poppy Day'

• By Andy

The Returned Services League of Australia (RSL) is a not for profit organisation supporting men and woman who have served, or are currently serving in the Australian Defence Force (ADF). The RSL was formed in 1916, undergoing several name changes until finally settling on the current title name. The RSL incorporates both current and former servicemen and women. The patron of the RSL is Queen Elizabeth II and the current national president of the league is Rear Admiral Ken Doolan (AO RAN).

As of 2010 the league comprised of precisely 186,652 members. The RSL has branches in all of Australia's six

states and two territories. Branches are the main hubs which are in turn made up of sub-branches.

The main focus of the RSL is the welfare of the Australian men and women serving in the armed forces. They campaign tirelessly for veteran entitlements, the protection and preservation of former battlefields and the personal rights of soldiers, sailors and airmen who have served the country. They are also committed to providing funeral services as a way of commemorating those who have fought or served Australia.

Every year on the November 11th 'Red Poppy Day' is held. Poppy flowers are handed out to all servicemen and women and are also available for purchase to help support and continue

the services of the RSL.

The Western Australia state branch has over 8,500 service members and 2,000 affiliates that belong to a network of 130 sub-branches throughout the state. Members range from several thousand in the metro and regional centres to only a few living in small rural areas. These members might be isolated but they are still determined to retain the identity of the ex-service community in their location.

Western Australia's main RSL headquarters is called Anzac House and is located at 28 St George's Terrace Perth, opposite the Governor's House. The WA state branch was formed in 1916 when the national RSL was formed. Since that time the WA RSL has been hugely proactive in

attending to the welfare needs of its members, giving particular focus to those in needs or in particularly dire circumstances.

Any person who has served, or is currently serving in any branch of the armed forces is welcomed and encouraged to join. An individual however must have served, or currently be serving in a war or theatre of conflict for no less than six months. The RSL is open to all Australians who fit these criteria. Members of other Commonwealth nations, the United States Armed Forces as well as any other country that is not an enemy of Australia are also welcome.

To find out more information on the RSL you can visit their website at rslhq.org.au

Online resources help Australians combat mental health issues

• By Jason

According to research, approximately 20% of the Australian population aged between 16 and 85 have experienced, or are currently experiencing mental health issues. This is a serious and prominent problem that society needs to address. The internet is a wealth of resource for anyone suffering, or wanting to help someone suffering from such problems. Below is a collection of websites that people may find useful when taking steps towards combating mental health problems.

Depression:

• beyondblue.org.au

This is an excellent website as it has huge amounts of information on all forms of depression. People can browse in their own time, creating good foundations and a pressure free introduction to self help.

• depression.meetup.com

This is a good way to connect with others who may be experiencing similar problems. It is possible to create or engage in support networks that may be very helpful to recovery.

• actbelongcommit.org.au

Act Belong Commit is an amazing organisation dedi-

cated to encouraging people suffering from depression to re-engage with society and start participating in activities that they enjoy. Just browsing through the website is a positive step towards recovery.

Anxiety:

• anxietyonline.org.au

This is a good website as it is local to Australia and therefore has relevant contact details and information. It is a good way for people to explore the condition themselves and do some research in private.

• ecouch.anu.edu.au

This resource is self-help based and can be used from home in a comfortable setting. The positive, proactive nature of the resource is designed to be beneficial and encouraging.

• **Mental Health Emergency Response Line**

This number is an vital in case of emergency. Sometimes people may be more unstable than they are letting on and therefore it is good for them to have an emergency crisis line number just in case their condition worsens. Contact them on 08 9224 8888, 1800 676 822 (rural freecall) or 1300 555 788 (all hours) - 24/7 Psychiatric emergency assessment & advisory service.

Liberal vs Labor lead the way but what about the 'other' parties?

• By Michele

Australia generally has a two party system consisting of the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Liberal Party. It is commonly accepted that these are the only two parties who have a realistic chance at gaining leadership of the country. During the most recent election on September 7th 2013, Australians cast their ballots, election results confirming that for the first time in six years, Australia is now under Liberal rule.

Whilst many Australians associate themselves with either being a Labor or Liberal supporter, many do not know that there are various other minor parties which have been registered for federal elections with the Australian Electoral Commission.

For example, there is the Animal Justice Party, Australian Fishing and Lifestyle Party, Australian Sex Party, Smoker's Rights Party and Help End Marijuana Prohibition (HEMP) Party. This year a record 54 parties were registered with the Australian Electoral Commission. This is more than double the 24 which were listed for the previous federal election in 2010.

In recent years these non-conventional parties have skyrocketed in response to rising hostility towards the major Australian parties in office. Such minor parties strive to draw on the feelings of many Australians, particularly young people, that they are not being adequately represented.



An anonymous voter casts his ballot.

Despite the fact that they are registered, most minor parties are not politically relevant on a large scale. Rather they engage in campaigning for minor positions and influence within the younger generation of Australians.

Another thing that sets non-traditional parties apart is their attempt to represent not just a political stance but also social and lifestyle issues. These range from parties such as the Australian Fishing and Lifestyle Party and the Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party to groups such as The HEMP Party, who campaign for the legalisation of cannabis in general society for medical, recreational and industrial purposes. Other official registrants include the single-issue Bank Reform Party and Bullet Train for Australia, to the somewhat bizarrely named Coke in the Bubblers Party.

The most generously funded of the minor parties is the Palmer United Party. The party was formed this year by Clive Palmer, an outspoken and ambitious mining tycoon. His group advocates to focus the official government agenda on encouraging a 'free market' in order to boost corporate profits. This would largely include a drastic deduction in taxes for businesses and wealthy Australians.

Given that Australia celebrates freedom of speech, freedom of expression and many other rights, non-conventional and often frivolous parties are allowed to be formed. However, will these parties become mainstream parties such as Labor or Liberal? Probably not. These parties do not address the everyday pressing issues that the majority of society feels are important. Many consider the frivolous parties to be out of touch with reality or not taking a clear, calculated and effective approach to running the country.

What's on your curriculum?

• By Angel

Recently I found out that a year nine drama teacher at my daughter's school had given copies of 'The Assuming Song' to students to sing. If you are not familiar with this song, it is quite disgusting. Definitely for adults ears only. I find it disgraceful that it has been given to 14-15 year old school kids. What are they trying to teach our children? Most high school students I know can barely spell. Perhaps teachers should get back

to basics instead of teaching lurid songs to their highly impressionable students.

I have to sign a permission slip for my child to watch a movie at school, where was the permission slip for my child to sing such a horrid song? I will be speaking to the principal of this school as I feel it is entirely inappropriate content. For those of you who don't know the song, look it up on the internet. I can guarantee you will agree. I wonder how many other parents are aware of this, and what they think?

Creative job searching

• By Georgia

Job searching can be a long and tedious process, especially when you apply for similar jobs on a daily basis. Many people limit themselves to simply sending off a resume and cover letter. However with a little creativity you can turn your quest for employment into something exciting!

A great way to get yourself out there is to post a 'work wanted' ad

on Gumtree. Give it an attention grabbing title for maximum impact, this way potential employers will be able to find you before they even have a chance to advertise.

Profiles on sites such as LinkedIn are also an excellent way to advertise yourself and network with potential employers and colleagues.

Another great option is to print business cards for yourself. Many printing companies do incredibly cheap deals, some as low as five dollars for 250 cards. It's budget friendly self advertising and makes you look very professional!

Putting up posters in your local supermarket or community centre can also be very useful. Whether you are a handyman or a receptionist, your name and skills will be very much on show.

Setting up a website for yourself is also a very effective way of getting the attention of employers. If you are in a creative industry, having a virtual portfolio that people can visit is very beneficial.

Networking is perhaps one of the most under-rated ways of job searching. It can be daunting but socialising with different people and exploring your circle of contacts can often be one of the most effective ways of hearing about vacant positions.



One man's trash...



Turns out old cans are actually money in disguise.

• By Alexandra

There are all kinds of non-conventional ways to make money. When you don't have a full time job sometimes you have to be innovative and think of new ways to fill your wallet. You can make money by selling cans, lemonade, car parts, metal materials, old white goods, and electrical cords.

Verge collections are the best way to collect things such as metal, white goods and cords. People throw them out but don't realise how valuable they can be. You can ask your friends to keep cans that they use and offer to collect them at the end of the week. Once you have obtained your stock there are different places that you can go to sell the things that you have collected.

The price that they pay for the items

varies depending on the company. Some places pay average amounts, some pay more and some pay less than the recommended prices. The general price for car batteries is around two dollars. The general price for cans is around 40-60 cents per kilogram. The general price for electrical cords is around three to four dollars per kilogram, however some places buy them at up to six dollars.

When you sell lemonade, you can sell it from five cents to two dollars a cup. The more delicious it is, the more customers you will get and hence the more money you will make.

So when you're feeling down that you don't have a job, or just need some extra cash for the weekend, think outside the usual money making 'box'. You might be surprised at what you can achieve.

Breaking the cycle

• By Angel

Recently I have been asked to write an article for the ORS Community Newspaper. I have been told it can be on any subject. The reason I have been asked to do this is because I have been out of full time work for twelve months and part time work for eight months. As a result, Centrelink now require me to participate in an approved activity in order to continue receiving government payments.

'Get a job' I hear you say. Sounds easy right? Even though I have Certificates in Childcare and Disability Services, plus experience in schools as an education assistant, I still have not been able to gain employment, or even an interview for that matter. Am I too old to employ? I'm 43 by the way. If that isn't the problem then what is it? It can't be my experience, or lack of

qualifications. Only recently I read a full page newspaper spread about how desperate child care centres were for staff. Despite this, the very next page under the employment section had no childcare jobs advertised, not one. They can't be in too much need for childcare workers. I've also sent off multiple 'expressions of interest' to centres and heard nothing.

Now I hear on the news that education assistant jobs are being cut. There goes the future of our children, and another job avenue for me. Do I need to study more? Perhaps I should start thinking about getting into a different field. Sounds like a good idea. It's ashame I don't have a job to pay for further study, education or training though. Which wouldn't be required if I had a job. It's a vicious circle and one that is seemingly becoming increasingly hard to break.

Urban oasis works towards creating a sustainable future

• By Jalen

Perth City Farm (PCF) is an urban ecological oasis, breathing organic life into the CBD. PCF was founded in 1994 by Men of the Trees, a not-for-profit organisation with a self confessed motto to "bring people together to plant and grow trees and to achieve healthy, productive, sustainable landscapes". In conjunction with the Planetary Action Network, PCF strive to promote these ideas to the people of Perth.

PCF is located on the eastern edge of Perth city, accessible via Claisebrook train station. Somewhat ironically it is located on the site of a former scrap metal yard and a battery recycling plant. Over the years the colourful site has grown to become a Western Australian icon, promoting environmental awareness, 'green' living, sustainability and organic produce. They do this by encouraging community engagement as much as possible, their website stating they are committed to "working together to create greener cities and sustainable landscapes for the future".

Of course they practice what they preach, selling seedlings from their urban farm, running compost workshops and providing information on how to cultivate high intensity food production for urban spaces. The

farm operates from 8.30am to 4pm Tuesday to Friday and 8.m to 12pm on Saturdays.

On Saturdays they also run a market from 8am - 12pm, their aim to "support local, organic and biodynamic growers and producers through making their produce directly available to the Perth community". Here you can buy all sorts of things, from organic vegetables and biodynamic dairy products to eco-friendly household goods and homemade body products. All the sellers are passionate about retailing ethical and sustainable produce so you can be sure that any purchase you make is environmentally friendly.

PCF also features an onsite café which serves up a delicious selection of tea, coffee, cakes, muffins, award winning breads and main meals. Wherever possible the food from the cafe is free range, organic, environmentally sustainable and locally produced.

A variety of indoor and outdoor spaces are also available to hire for private and corporate events, capable of accommodating 10-200 people. They recently hosted a fashion launch event which proves how diverse an organisation it is.

For more information you can visit their website at perthcityfarm.org.au



Some of the seedlings on sale at Perth City Farm.

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The other track is the leadership track. This involves completing the Competent Leadership Manual. The manual involves a range of roles that you normally complete at each meeting. More advanced projects include coordinating club events and running speech contests.

Once you complete these two manuals, there are further opportunities to build your skills and confidence. These include becoming a club officer and running a club, completing further communication and leadership awards, and even becoming the leader for the organisation in WA!

Toastmasters has had a huge impact on my life. Having a highly introverted personality, I was originally a very shy person. I lacked the ability and confidence to speak to other people. I made a determined resolution to deal with this problem and joined Toastmasters in 2010. Three years later, I have earned the highest Toastmaster award and it has transformed me as a person. I now have the confidence to speak to large groups of people, interact socially in all kinds of environments, mentor people, and inspire others with my leadership skills and personal achievements. I've seen similar progress in other people who joined the organisation. In a very short time they change from very tim-

id and reluctant speakers to confident and capable presenters who love doing speeches!

It is also great fun and an excellent place to meet and interact with others in a supportive environment. People from all walks of life join Toastmasters. No matter what you do, you will find someone who has something fascinating to talk about!

Toastmasters also looks great on your CV. Even if you have been out of work for a while, the skills and projects you do in Toastmasters develop exactly the kinds of skills most employers look for when hiring. The ability to speak to people, work in a team, organise and lead people are universal skills that are relevant and

necessary to all professions and occupations.

Learning to speak before an audience also boosts your self confidence enormously. This does wonders for your ability to cope with tough job interviews, difficult people in work environments, different social situations and even going out on a date!

Toastmasters membership is very affordable and finding a club near you is not hard. If you want further information, please contact David Nicholas DTM on 0401 011 012 or Greg Lynn DTM 0408 955 138. Also feel welcome to have a look at our WA website for more information on clubs and speech workshops: toastmastersd17.org.

The varied messages of reality TV

• By Rosemary

Watching TV is relaxing, exciting and allows you to escape from your sometimes mundane life. However recently people have been writing to media companies complaining that the actors and actresses are portraying unrealistic fantasies, implying that it is easy to look great, have plenty of money (or marry into money) and not have much bad luck. That's where reality TV shows come in. These include programs such as Marry My Boy, The Farmer Wants a Wife, The Bachelor Australia, Beauty and the Geek, and Big Brother. It's great to have reality TV shows because it makes the audience feel included. They help to make us feel less self conscious about ourselves and give a realistic insight into the lives of the famous stars or singers we admire so much.

Marry My Boy is funny because contestants have to get their parents to set up dates in the hope of finding a potential life partner. It is a similar

idea to arranged marriages that some cultures still practice. I feel sorry for the men who depend on their parents to help them find a life partner, they are adults, not children. The women want a man in their lives, not another child to look after. They need protection and security, especially if they want to start a family in the future.

The Farmer Wants a Wife is also entertaining to watch. It must be hard to be a full time farmer and find someone to spend the rest of your life with, especially when your job is nonstop. Lots of women prefer to be close to the city where they can have facilities such as movies, shops, beauty parlours, cafes and restaurants. This show is lovely and down to earth, however some of the women don't come across very well. Some of them are far too mean, dress up in clothes that aren't appropriate and fight for the attention of the farmer in front of the camera.

The Bachelor Australia is a great show, I like how it represents Australian people as the ones I have seen in

the past have all been set in America. This show is unusually funny, following a group of girls who are fighting over a good looking man. However I do feel that they overdress the girls which can put viewers off. As an audience, we want to see people act normally, without wearing too much makeup and expensive clothes that we can't afford. They also go on expensive outings and dates that must cost a lot. I think it would be nice to sometimes do simple things like a walk or a picnic in the park. Such activities are free but still enjoyable.

Sometimes the reality shows are just plain embarrassing. Beauty and the Geek often makes me feel degraded and unintelligent due to the apparent stupidity of some of the women. They give women an awful stereotype and I suspect that at times the producers of the show have paid them to act so ignorantly. For example one young woman stated that she thought a Bunsen burner was part of a rocket system. Another boasted they could spell

'Kardashian' yet they didn't know if 'cat' began with a 'c' or a 'k'. I only watched the first two seasons of the show and then had to stop as it is cringe worthy and makes me feel uneducated.

Big Brother is unusual because they have cameras recording for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The program has evolved worldwide and is quite popular, especially when famous stars take part. Personally I don't enjoy watching people make fools of themselves which happens a lot in the Big Brother house. The fact that the audience is involved in voting people out makes it interesting though.

Overall, I think there are positive and negative aspects to all reality TV shows. They have the ability to make us, as an audience, feel better or worse about ourselves which is interesting. At the end of the day it depends on your personality, values and taste that determines which shows you will enjoy watching.



Some of the adorable puppies you'll find at the Dog Refuge.

Man's best friend given a helping hand

• By Jen

The Dog Refuge in Shenton Park is a not-for-profit organisation who are committed to rescuing, caring for and re-homing dogs. It was established in 1935 and is proud to be one of the oldest animal welfare organisations in Australia. They have a passion for protecting pooches in need, stating "our activities are motivated by the fundamental understanding that dogs are entitled to the same love and respect that they unconditionally give to us". Their facilities can house up to 150 dogs at a time, every year filling up the spaces with hundreds of dogs and puppies that have been abused, abandoned or neglected. They also run training courses for puppies that need a little discipline in their lives! You can check out their website, dogshome.org.au, for more information as well as photos of some of their loving residents.



**Disability™
Employment
Services**

DES promotes employment for all

• By Abel

Disability Employment Services (DES) providers are dedicated to helping people with disabilities gain employment. ORS is just one of 224 providers of the DES program which operates across almost 2000 sites Australia wide. These providers are

currently assisting approximately 140,000 individuals with disabilities to gain meaningful and ongoing employment in the labour market.

ORS are committed to delivering the highest standard DES program, working closely with employers and their DES employees to provide advice, support and services at no cost.

The Perth attraction that takes you to another galaxy

• By Greg

You have probably heard about the Perth Museum, the State Library, and even the Aquarium at Sorrento Quay. But a place that might be called the best kept secret in WA is tucked away in Bickley, just a 30 minute drive from Perth CBD. This is the Perth Observatory, the oldest continuing and functioning observatory in Australia. The original observatory was actually located close to the modern Perth CBD. Established in 1900 and originally designed to help with time-keeping, the functions of the observatory expanded to include research into solar eclipses, planet transits, and observing the Moon to assist in the American lunar program.

In 1966 the Perth observatory was closed and relocated to the hills in Bickley to escape from growing light pollution. The growth in the city led to more street lights giving off large amounts of light that obscured the night sky. In the late 1960's and 70's a number of large telescopes were installed, including the Astrographic telescope that was used to survey asteroids and comets, and the large Lowell telescope that was later used to examine exploding stars called supernova and galaxies outside the larger universe.

In 1987 the observatory began an outreach and science education program in the form of public tours. Astronomers and staff would open the telescopes for public viewing and would explain objects if the public participated in the night tours. In the face of budget cuts and the threat of closure in the 1980's and 1990's, the observatory streamlined and modernised. Staff numbers were substantially reduced and most of the equipment was computerised and automated. Fortunately, the observatory was able to form research links with Curtin,

UWA and Murdoch universities.

From the 1990's and into the new millennium the outreach and science education programs continued. Due to staff reductions and cost issues, the observatory staff decided to form the Perth Observatory Volunteer Group (POVG or 'the vollies') staffed by ordinary people with a passion for Astronomy to help the staff co-ordinate and run viewing nights. The group rapidly expanded and became an integral part of the observatory.

During the 1990's and early 2000's the observatory continued to make important discoveries. These included the discovery of 30 new exploding stars (supernova), 29 minor planets, and important scientific findings about planets outside of our own solar system.

Unfortunately in 2013 all government funding for scientific research at the Observatory ceased and the last two scientific research staff left, due to the government funding pressures in other areas such as radio astronomy. However the observatory remains open for public tours and outreach, which is now almost entirely run by the POVG group with the remaining staff member, Greg Lowe.

The future of the observatory remains uncertain, yet with the rise of low-cost automated telescopes and serious research done by university students and amateurs at the observatory, there is hope for the future.

Public tours of the observatory are run during the day and at night. Day tours are run throughout the year and night tours are run from September

to May, depending on the weather. A night tour of the observatory costs between \$25-\$40. Tours are open to all members of the general public, as well as school, science group and club outings.

Smoking is prohibited at the observatory and taking pictures (especially with a flash camera) is not permitted as this affects the night vision of a person.

While light pollution is becoming a problem, people going on night tours will be treated to a beautiful view of the night sky, including the Milky Way, planets such as Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Saturn, the Moon, and also nebulas, star clusters and the Magellanic Clouds. Night tours will also include a short 'tour' of the Southern night sky and explanation of its major constellations.

The observatory has four or five telescopes operating on each viewing night, each of these focused on an object that is explained by a volunteer. Some of these are in special domes and others are small telescopes on a stand called a mount. A tour might also include the chance to visit the 24 inch Lowell telescope and the Astrographic telescope. After the tours members of the public are welcome to purchase astronomical items and books from the observatory gift shop.

The location of the observatory is usually very quiet and peaceful. The chance to look at the night sky in all its glory in silent appreciation is not to be missed. If you are lucky you might even get a chance to spot the kangaroos that regularly come and graze on the grass near the buildings. Bookings for tours can be made by calling (08) 9293 8255 between 8.30am and 3.30pm. Tickets cost \$38 for adults and \$28 for children/concession holders. For more information on the observatory and its facilities go to perthobservatory.wa.gov.au



A nebula, just one of the fascinating formations found in outer space.

Thoughts on the changing seasons

• By Jeannette

Summer: Skies are blue, clouds are white and fluffy, nights are longer and stars appear to be brighter and easier to see. The warmth permeates into our bodies, clothing becomes lighter, hats start to be worn and sunscreen gets applied. We go outdoors more and spend increased time away from home, enjoying the amazing weather. Holidays happen around this time of the year and there are always plenty of activities to do. Popular ones include outdoor movies, the beach, swimming pools, parties, visiting friends, spending time with family and sunning our bodies. We seem to be so much more active when the weather is warmer. The sun also seems to make people happier and encourages them to smile more. It's a beautiful season!

Autumn: The weather shifts and the leaves change colour, falling to the ground and creating a carpet in an array of reds, oranges, browns and yellows. A crisp coolness can be felt in the air, winter is on the way. The environment is pretty but also hesitant, waiting for the 'hibernation' of its people. It's the time when we never really know how the weather is going to react, sunny days turning into cloudy and rainy ones. The days gradually get shorter, pools are emptied or covered up and gutters are cleaned out. If we are lucky enough we can still enjoy the occasional lovely warm night, yet still prepare for the cooler ones, snuggling down in our blankets as the rain falls on the roof.

Winter: Rain, cold, fog, mist, thunder and lightning. The best thing about winter is that we finally have an opportunity to stay at home and hibernate. We get all rugged up with layers



A perfect summer's day at Floreat Beach

of nice warm clothing, have hot soups to warm our chilled bodies, sleep with blankets on our beds and snuggle into the sofa when watching TV. It's such a perfect time to wind down, go to bed early and sit in front of a nice warm fire blazing away in the fireplace. If you require activities to do try movie and game nights inside with family and friends. If it's a stormy day be daring and take a drive out to the beach to watch the waves crashing upon the shore. It's an awesome feeling, watch-

ing Mother Nature at play. If you are game enough you can get out of the car and 'feel' the storm, it's invigorating to the spirit. You can also go and play in the rain, splashing in the puddles and reliving your childhood.

Spring: Ahh, spring has sprung and the birds are singing, the flowers are blooming and the bees are buzzing. Reptiles start coming out and warming themselves in the heat. The crops are green and it's the last 'extreme' growth season for most plants

before summer sets in. Clothing is reduced, jumpers are lighter and umbrellas begin to be forgotten. People smile more and animals seem to become more active. Get out into the countryside and look at our wildflowers, we have some of the prettiest in the world. Spring is also a time for cleaning! An opportunity to 'freshen up' bedding, dust, throw out old junk and air out the house. Spring is also a popular time for diets as people aspire for toned summer 'bikini bodies'.

SUDOKU

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CHALLENGE: Make as many words as possible using the letters in the box. Each word must be at least three letters long and contain the letter 'M'.

Thought of the day: As humans inhabiting this earth we have a responsibility to be aware of the world around us. We need to change, for the benefit of generations to come. A bit of empathy goes a long way. We need to practice consideration towards the harmony of others. We need to be more understanding and learn to help others, not resent them and their imperfections. I say again, we need to change to keep all of the animals, trees and humans on this earth alive.

• By Denise



Artwork by D. Caparn

Poetry Contributions

Birds

• By Denise

*Do you consider a bird flying past whilst driving your car?
Slow down, be conscious, be aware.
Don't drive fast and knock them down.
They need their delicate wings to travel far.*

Newstart

• By Denise

*In a war, people on Newstart will be stronger.
We should thank the government.
Why you ask?
Because we will be able to survive on less.*

“Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolution”

- Kahlil Gibran, Lebanese-American artist, poet, writer and philosopher

Life is what it is

• By Lisa

I grew up a fiercely independent child. I broke my leg at ten months old playing outside. The first words I learned to spell, other than my own name and address, were Constantinople and Mississippi. I could also spell these backwards. I could intelligibly hold and win an argument with either parent before the age of two. I enjoyed learning new things and loved interacting with people. Children, adults and old aged pensioners alike loved to chat to me. They would say, “Oh isn't she quite the little chatterbox”. My mother would reply with a wry smile, “Yes, isn't she just”, knowing that I hadn't stopped blabbering on my whole life and that I had very literally worn her out.

Growing up wasn't much different. As a teenager, I was always out with friends, going to parties, the beach and generally hanging out, as teenagers do. Occasionally getting up to a bit of mischief too I might add. I left home at the age of sixteen. It was the usual parent versus child argument. I was an independent young woman and I thought I knew best. My attitude at the time was not in accordance with the rules of the house, so I packed my bags, got on a bus and moved in with a girlfriend. I know that a lot of parents out there can relate to that particular argument and I am sure at one point or another this topic has come up in your homes.

This independence that was instilled in me at conception, and this basic primal need has got me through many a tough time throughout the years. I have always, through what I recognise now as that instinctive primal urge, managed to ‘get through’ all the soul destroying experiences that life has thrown my way. On one hand I think I am kind of lucky really, that this was one trait within me that was innate and also encouraged by my parents.

I, like most people who have gone through some extreme hardships, have veered off the beaten track into some very dark recesses of my mind a couple of times. To places of despair so debilitating that various methods of self harm, such as drug use, was the only thing that inhibited the emotional pain of the experience at the time. When circumstance

and emotional excruciation envelops you with the illusion that all hope is lost, that there are no good people in this world anymore and that no one truly cares. That God himself is on a personal mission just to put you through every mental, emotional, physical and spiritual ringer, just to see what you are made of.

I know some of you reading this have either been in this place, may possibly still be in this place, or have a friend or a family member who has also been in this place. If it was a destination that I could stamp on my passport, my passport would be full. Like your friends or family members I too would have proverbially ‘been there and done that’. They say that you should always have faith, always have hope. I say you have to go back to your primal instincts. You have to get back to basics in order to survive.

For me personally, it is that innate need to be independent. It is that fighting spirit within that says to me, as it has always said, “I can do this”. No matter what I have experienced, or am currently experiencing, I know that good old primal instinct will serve me well, as it always has. It has been the only constant presence in my life other than the love and support from my family, even when I wasn't allowing myself to feel it.

These days God continues to push my buttons, and at times I am still tempted to go up there and give him a right royal ass whooping for allowing me to be here and experience such things. Right now I wonder why he has put me in a less than ideal situation, where after a lifetime of independence I find myself having to be ‘dependant’ on my family for a roof over my head, and food on the table.

What I am learning is that our lives are a series of lessons. We are born with our own story. Most importantly I am learning to appreciate, in my moments of clarity that are rare and insightful such as now, the lessons and challenges that I face and to be extremely grateful for that tiny little spark of primal creation that I was born with.

A pivotal question for all of you who are not in a great place today is “what drives you?” Ask yourself, how has that ‘spark’ been consistent throughout your experiences and what life lessons are you being taught now?



Go green and reap the benefits

• By Jasmine

Green tea has recently skyrocketed in popularity. It's gone from being a strange coloured Asian drink to a celebrity endorsed 'super leaf' with a seemingly never ending list of health benefits. If you've ever wondered what all the fuss is about look no further than this article for a full rundown on what it is, where it comes from and why it's good for you.

Green tea originates in China, used as a herbal medicine for thousands of years. Its medicinal qualities lie in the production process of the leaf. While most teas undergo fermentation, green tea avoids this, meaning that the leaf retains the majority of its beneficial antioxidants and poly-phenol substances.

One of the major components of green tea is a potent plant nutrient called 'epigallocatechin gallate', more commonly known as EGCG. This substance has an array of health benefits that make green tea one of the most popular beverages on contemporary café menus. Below are our top ten reasons why you should start, or continue, to drink green tea.

1. Green tea fights the bulge. The active ingredient EGCG, increases the rate at which fat is burned in your body. A cup in the morning is thought to kick start your metabolism. Follow it with several throughout the day and you'll soon notice a difference!

2. It targets stomach fat. Indulged in too much comfort food this winter? Get your green tea on! Research has shown that EGCG activates fat-burning genes in the abdomen area which can speed weight loss by up to 77 percent!

3. It keeps energy stable. EGCG keeps your blood sugar levels stable, actively working to improve insulin use in the body in order to prevent blood sugar highs and lows. This helps combat fatigue, moodiness and cravings for sugar and other unhealthy foods.

4. It may aid in preventing lung cancer. In 2010 *Cancer Prevention Research* published studies that suggested EGCG was capable of suppressing lung cancer cell growth.

5. It may slow colorectal cancer. EGCG appears to halt colorectal cancers, as indicated in a number of studies.

6 It helps combat prostate cancer. 2010 studies published in *Cancer Science* indicated that EGCG causes prostate cancer cells to 'commit suicide'.

7. It helps prevent skin damage and wrinkles. According to research, EGCG is 200 times more powerful than vitamin E at destroying skin damaging free radicals (free radicals are molecules with unpaired electrons that cause damage to surrounding healthy molecules in their search to find another electron). By drinking green tea you can help your body reduce the number of free radicals, which in turn may help reduce wrinkles and other signs of ageing.

8. It combats illness and disease. As stated above, green tea contains potent antioxidants that destroy free radicals. This is beneficial to more than just skin cells. Free radicals are increasingly linked to many serious chronic illnesses such as arthritis, diabetes, and cancer.

9. It fights tooth decay. Studies have suggested that catechin, the chemical antioxidant found in green tea, can aid in destroying bacteria and viruses that cause throat infections, tooth rot other dental conditions

10. It tastes great! Green tea has a distinct 'earthy' flavour and now comes in all kinds of delicious blends. Check out your supermarket or specialty tea store for interesting fruity flavours. You can have it hot or iced depending on the weather, sweeten it with natural herbs like stevia or add a squeeze of fresh lemon juice to liven up your cup.

So there you have it! Green tea can do wonders for your health, both inside and out. Recommended daily intake ranges from two to ten cups a day, depending on how far you want to take the habit. It does however contain caffeine which is something to keep in mind if you find you are sensitive to the substance.

The colourful history of Coke

• By Cieran

Coca Cola, or 'Coke', was first introduced to America in the 19th century. Over the years Coke has expanded all over the world, retailing in more ranges and flavours than ever. The famous soft drink was created by John Pemberton, who had intended for the drink to be medicinal. It once contained an estimated nine milligrams of cocaine per glass, an ingredient which was thought to make Coke a 'valuable brain tonic' and cure for nervous afflictions. This controversial ingredient has since been abandoned, permanently removed in 1903.

The company was later bought out by an entrepreneur named Asa Griggs Candler, who used his marketing skills to make Coca Cola a household name. The company began by selling bottles through vending machines, later changing to selling in stores. The prod-

uct immediately sky rocketed and has now become one of the most popular soft drinks in the world.

There have been a lot of complaints, and even lawsuits about the effects of drinking Coke. These concern the high levels of caffeine and acids as well as accusations of weight gain and health complications. All were dismissed by the court, the findings ruling that it was the consumers own choice to drink the product. Bottles also include a label stating what it is made out of. The ingredients are as follows: carbonated water, sugar (sucrose or high-fructose corn syrup depending on country of origin), caffeine, phosphoric acid, caramel colour (E150d) and natural flavourings.

In my opinion if you don't like the flavour or the ingredients, then don't drink it. No one is forcing you, it's your choice and yours alone.

Cro-What?

• By Sally

The 'Cronut' shot to global fame earlier this year. It is the unique product of NYC chef, Dominique Ansel. It is a fusion of a doughnut and a croissant, hence the hybrid name. It is made with laminated dough according to a secret recipe which took Ansel two months and ten recipes to perfect. The dough is then sugared, filled and glazed to create the finished product. The cronut is in such high demand that lines begin to form outside the bakery hours before it opens! Cronut purchases are then limited to two per customer. For those that aren't inclined to fly to the Big Apple there are a number of make at home recipes that you can try. Whatever the case, it sounds delicious!



The famous 'cronut'. Photo courtesy of Dominique Ansel Bakery, NYC.

Cost effective cooking



• By Michele

Many people are feeling the crunch lately and unfortunately, healthy food and substantial meals are often the first thing to get sacrificed on a tight budget. It doesn't have to be this way! There are many techniques and recipes you can use to save money and stretch the dollar further when cooking.

Herbs are a great way to have a healthy, flavoursome meal while not breaking the bank with fancy ingredients. Rosemary, thyme and basil are easy plants to grow and they are far more aromatic and healthy compared to packaged sauces. You don't need to have a large plot of land if you are short of space in your house or apartment. They can be grown all year round on your windowsill or balcony if you have a sunny spot. When the herbs are fully grown, you can pluck them and add them to your chicken, lamb or beef dishes. Herb seedlings are cheap and easily obtainable from local gardening shops like Bunnings and Waldecks.

Buying meat like chicken and beef from your local Coles, Woolworths or IGA nearing closing hours on a Sunday usually translates into huge savings. You can save further dollars if you buy them in bulk. The meat is usually not nearing its expiry date but rather being sold at a discounted price so that fresh orders of meat are ready for the new week.

You can also save money by buying whole products instead of individual packets containing certain cuts. Buying an entire chicken is more cost effective than simply buying thighs or breast meats separately. You can grill or roast the entire chicken, using the leftovers to make sandwich fillings or add it into salads for a more substantial meal. Further, the entire carcass of the chicken can be boiled in soup to be made into chicken stock. Therefore buying an entire chicken does save money in the long run considering it has many diversified uses.

Ground beef is also another cost effective meat. It is relatively cheap and has many uses. You can make meatloaf, beef patties for burgers, bolognese or add it into your taco meal. If you want to be healthy ground beef also comes in lean form which reduces fat intake.

That extra loaf of bread in the fridge need not be thrown away due to it being a little stale. It can be made into a cheap and satisfying bread pudding which is a perfect winter comfort food on cold days. Extra bread can also be made into French toast by soaking it in beaten eggs and then frying. This makes a delicious breakfast.

Seafood can be expensive in markets. Instead, you can go on a fishing expedition and catch your own fish. Although there are initial outlays, for example fishing permits and boat hire, these can be easily shared with friends. The fun and joy of catching fish also outweighs the costs. Plus, any caught fish can be kept frozen for nearly six months in the freezer and then used at a later date.

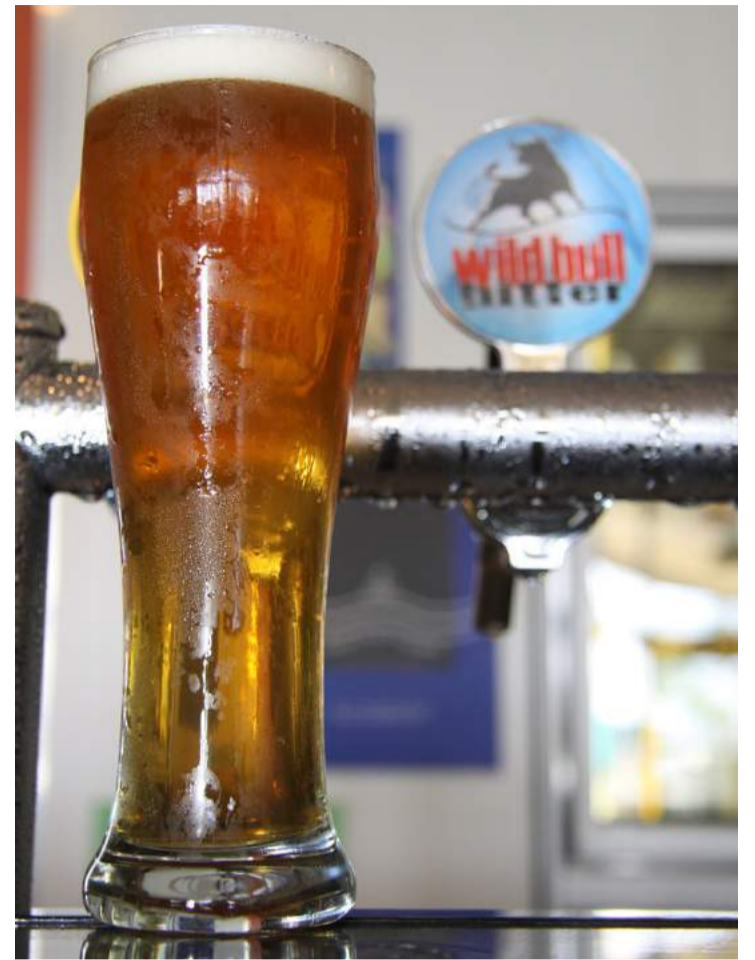
Probably the most important part of cooking on a budget is to plan ahead when doing your grocery shopping. This avoids wandering in the doughnut section. Write down your grocery list and stick to the items on it when you go to your local supermarket.

Further, consider that many Australians throw out food, perhaps it's time to look at your pantry, fridge and freezer to see whether there are extra food items that can be consumed. Are there any month old tins of food hiding in the back of the cupboard that you can incorporate into your meals this week? Do you have any leftovers from the weekend? Is there something that needs to be used within the next few days?

With these tips in mind, cooking on a budget need not be a dreadful exercise. With a little creativity, eating healthy food is obtainable, achievable and above all affordable.



A humble herb garden can go a long way.



A very tempting looking pint of Wild Bull Bitter.

Found! The best brew in town

• By Brian

In the last edition we featured a review of Wild Bull, one of Perth's best independent microbreweries. The establishment is unique and exciting, a perfect day trip destination for local Perth residents and tourists alike. This edition we look at a selection of their beers, giving you an idea of what delightful brews to expect when you decide to visit.

Wild Bull has a selection of five beers available on tap, which are preservative and additive free. This selection includes: Wild Bull Stout, Wild Bull Bitter, Wild Bull Irish Ale, Wild Bull Special Irish Ale and Wild Bull Amber Ale. Today we will summarise two of these beers, starting with Wild Bull Amber Ale, followed by Wild Bull Bitter.

Wild Bull Amber Ale: Named after its dark amber colour and topped with an off white head, drinkers will enjoy a distinct caramel flavour followed by a bitter aftertaste. At 4.8%, Amber Ale is an adventurous beer minus the heaviness.

Wild Bull Bitter: This 3.5% bitter beer has proved to be Wild Bull's most popular beer amongst drinkers. Wild Bull Bitter has a moderate bitterness which doesn't overwhelm its caramel malt flavour, slight fruity aroma and herbaceous hop tinge. Its golden amber colour topped by a modest white head, makes this an excellent choice on a hot, South West Australian summer's day.

Top spots for a lazy brunch

• By Rosemary

Brunch is the perfect way to spend a relaxing weekend morning. Here is a list of my favourite spots in Perth: **Sayers** (Northbridge), **Cantina** (Mount Lawley), **Toast** (East

Perth), **Wild Poppy** (Fremantle), **The Beaufort Street Merchant** (Highgate), **Taylor's Art & Coffee House** (Middle Swan), **The Wild Fig** (Scarborough), **Piccolo's Corner** (Leederville), **John Street Cafe** (Cottesloe). Enjoy!

Get ready for take off!

• By Michele

Perth is the most isolated city in Australia. In fact, Perth is one of the most isolated cities in the world. The closest Australian capital city to Perth is Adelaide, which is 2,104 kilometres away. Jakarta, Indonesia is 3,002 kilometres from Perth, making it closer than Sydney which is 3,291 kilometres away.

Due to its remote location, air travel is an important means of transportation for Perth residents and visitors. The city might be isolated, yet it nevertheless has very impressive air travel facilities which connect it to the rest of the world. Due to its popularity as a tourist destination, travelling to and from Perth has never been easier.

One of the fastest growing airlines is Emirates, operating at least three flights daily into Perth and boasting excellent connections to Europe. It utilises the latest state-of-the-art planes such as the Boeing 777ER to serve Dubai and Perth. Further, Emirates has been voted 2013's Best Airlines in the World due to their excellent in flight services. We have never been so lucky to have such an esteemed airline flying to Perth three times daily.

Some of the world's leading airlines such as Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines and Cathay Pacific also fly into Perth. Singapore Airlines touches down in our city at least three to four times a day. It also has excellent connections to Europe and the United States. Changi airport in Singapore is an excellent airport for connecting flights, many travellers from Perth arranging to stop over here. It boasts a swimming pool, educational



An incredible window view made possible by air travel.

flower shows, movie theatres, shops and many other facilities to keep you entertained during your transfer time. Further, Singapore Airlines offers many benefits for those who are transiting in Singapore. These include free tours of Singapore and S\$40 vouchers to spend in any of the hundreds of

shops at Changi airport. Cathay Pacific is also an excellent airline with many connections to Europe, America and to China.

According to Perth Airport authorities, new flights are regularly being scheduled to many international destinations. This includes Jetstar's flight

to Lombok which commences on 24 September 2013. Philippines Airlines have also recently commenced flights from Manila to Perth.

In the summer months leading up to the busy Christmas period, Qantas has recently announced that it will operate a seasonal direct flight from Perth to Auckland operating from early December 2013 to February 2014. International air travellers will now have more connections to Auckland on top of Air New Zealand's daily flight from Perth. A further benefit to Qantas' flight to Auckland includes an extra luggage allowance of 30 kg which benefits passengers with big families.

Emirates recently announced that it plans to bring the Airbus A380, the biggest passenger airliner in the world, to Perth. According to Emirates president Tim Clark, passengers will enjoy a quieter cabin and less dry cabin atmosphere while flying with the biggest passenger airliner ever to have served Perth. Perth Airport authorities are currently pushing to renovate the airport which is needed to accommodate the large plane. Part of the plans include a split level gate which be capable of loading passengers onto both decks of the super jumbo simultaneously in order to ease passenger congestion. They are hoping to complete the project by March 2014.

Despite being one of the most isolated cities in the world, Perth travellers still enjoy an array of international air travel benefits. We have definitely not been forgotten by the rest of the world, many international airlines flying into Perth with new products, services and planes at a greater speed than ever before.

Margaret River a spectacular getaway for tourists and locals alike

• By Margaret

With its sweeping vineyards, majestic karri forests and spectacular, untouched beaches, Margaret River is an incredible place to visit this summer. Whether you like camping or luxury boutiques, this charming country town in WA's south west has it all. I recently returned from a three day trip and could not recommend it more to both tourists and locals.

On the first day we woke up in the morning to the sounds of kookaburras laughing. Yawning, I ventured out onto our balcony to see what the weather had in store for us. Immediately my breath was taken away by the beautiful way that the sun shimmered off the gum leaves. The sky was already a gorgeous shade of blue and there wasn't a cloud to be seen. After a lazy breakfast and coffee in the morning sunshine we ventured off to begin the day's activities.

First up was a stop off at Surfer's Point which is where all the locals go to take on the huge waves

that Mother Nature conjures up in this part of WA. We spent a while sitting on the grass and watching the brave surfers take them on. Definitely not an activity for the faint hearted! Next up was a visit to Mammoth Cave. The drive alone was spectacular, I couldn't help but be in awe as our car cruised along the winding Caves Road that snaked through the 100 year old karri forest. The trees were taller than any I've ever seen before. The cave itself was truly captivating. The sheer size of the caverns made you feel so small. The air was refreshingly cool inside, a nice relief from the hot outside temperatures.

Next on the agenda were some visits to some of Margaret River's most famous wineries – Leeuwin Estate, Voyager Estate and some breweries thrown in for good measure (and to keep the hubby happy). The estates are lovely, set on extensive blocks and often surrounded by native forest. We tasted several different wines before stopping for lunch at Eagle Bay Brewing Company. The food was delicious

and it was incredibly relaxing to spend hours just eating, drinking and soaking up the beautiful landscape. Then it was time for dessert! Unsurprisingly we made a beeline for the Margaret River Chocolate Factory. Needless to say we both left a few kilos heavier thanks to all the free chocolate samples on offer and tempting stock to buy!

By this time it was nearing 5pm and we headed back to the chalet to regroup. With two glasses and a bottle of local wine in the cooler bag we headed back down to the beach to watch the sunset. We were given quite a show by a passing pod of dolphins! We then headed into the town centre for dinner at one of the local restaurants. The atmosphere was lovely and the food was delicious, lots of it sourced from fresh Margaret River produce. It had been a busy day and I was thankful to get back to our chalet and have a nice bubble bath with yet another glass of wine in hand. The following two days were equally as enjoyable and I can't wait to go back for more.



Discover WA's wildflower country

• By Jeannette

Are you tired of doing the same thing every weekend? The same old nights of videos, fine wine, dining or even the cinema. Need a new idea for the weekend to stop that restlessness that you have been feeling? If so continue reading for an activity that is fun, refreshing and will get you feeling on top of the world. I suggest a tour of our beautiful West Australian outback, seeking wildflowers.

You can drive your vehicle up from Perth through Moora, Coorow, Mingenew and through to Coalseam Conservation Park. You can then spend the night in Dongara and travel down the coast back to Perth, stopping at spots of 'colour' along the way. The destination is Coalseam Conservation Park, which after the spring rains is an area of lovely scenery. I like to consider it WA's own small Grand Canyon.

It's an all round trip of about 958 Kilometres (by the route I travelled) and you would use approximately 90 litres of fuel, dependent on your vehicle. If driving isn't an option for you, save up and go on a coach tour. Check out companies such as Casey Tours, however be warned that a coach tour is expensive. On the upside you don't have to organise anything apart from clothes, shoes, a camera and

some extra spending money.

I did this tour a few years ago with some friends. We were restless, bored, unable to think of anything new to do and in dire need of a short holiday break from home. A friend came up with the idea to go on a trip up north and 'see what we could see'. The car was packed on Friday night with all the equipment that we decided we would need. We packed our clothes, made sure we had some tools, a good spare tyre, fix a flat, a first aid kit, water, matches, a small can of petrol, sunscreen, hats, torches, a pair of good solid sneakers, cameras, batteries, and the list goes on. The preparation was like the scouts motto of 'be prepared'. Yes, we did overdo it a bit.

For food we planned to eat and drink at roadhouses or restaurants along the way. Once we were ready off we went on a trip to nowhere. We travelled up through Moora and stopped at places along the way to investigate patches of colour. What we found was wonderful, lots of small wildflowers that were so pretty, some appeared very delicate. Thus our 'see what we can see' trip quickly became a wildflower spotting tour. The amount of flowers was incredible considering they were just a short distance off the roadside. There was an amazing range, we even found some Orchids and Cats Paws.

We had a wonderfully relaxing time, ending up at

Coalseam Conservation Park which was full of lots more wildflowers. It was a wonderful experience, being up so high and overlooking such a vast area. The landscape was strewn with shades of pink, yellow, red, purple, orange. We took over 400 photos of flowers in that weekend.

We spent the night at the Dongara Denison Beach Holiday Park in an economy cabin. It wasn't as cheap as a campsite at Coalseam but it was comfortable and we didn't have to take bedding with us. We got up early the next morning and went down to the beach to view the monument for sailors. Rabbits were hiding in the scrub, making it such a peaceful setting.

We then got in the car and started to drive home. We still kept a lookout for wildflowers and made lots of stops along the way. We got home feeling tired but very happy and mentally refreshed. Ah, Mother Nature, you did it again.

• Please note that the wildflowers are best seen on foot. Please don't pick them as they die very quickly, are delicate and don't like to be disturbed. They don't survive being dug up and transported. If you want wildflowers in your garden go to a flower nursery and ask for them. These plants are usually grown by the nursery and can take a bit more of the 'rough' treatment.

Off the beaten track in Bali

• By Josef

Due to its close proximity, Bali is a hugely popular holiday destination for WA residents. Understandably, it can get a little crowded. Yet if you stray from the well-beaten tourist paths you'll soon discover Bali's authentic and culturally rich heart. Here are our top suggestions for how to see the 'real' Bali.

Set your compass north: Just a few hours drive from the chaos of Kuta is Tirtagangga, a charming base for exploring traditional villages, rice paddies and temples. You can also swim at the breathtaking Ujung Water Palace, a complex of pools built by a local rajah in 1947.

Escape to an island: Islands such as Nusa Penida, Nusa Lembongan and Nusa Ceningan are refreshingly lacking in tourists. They are renowned for their tranquil atmospheres and incredible wildlife sanctuaries. Visitors can enjoy activities such as bike rides through tiny villages, canoe trips through mangrove swamps and guided seaweed farm tours. They are also meccas for surfers wanting to escape the crowded waves of Kuta and surrounds.

Hike a Sacred Mountain: One of the best ways to escape the crowded tourist trail is to hike a mountain or volcano. Such adventures range from four hour hikes to four day expeditions. The most challenging is the three day trek up active volcano, Mount Rinjani situated on Lombok. It's a difficult climb but the view from the crater rim is worth it! Mount Batur and Mount Batukaru are also recommended, treks starting at midnight and finishing in time to watch the sunrise from the summit.

Celebrate Balinese culture: Ubud is renowned as the cultural heart of Bali, celebrated for its rich presence of Balinese art, dance and music. The scenery here is beautiful, bordered by mountains and terraced rice paddies. If you're into yoga, massages, spas and savour relaxation then Ubud is the place for you.

Live with the locals: A homestay is the perfect way to really immerse yourself in Balinese culture. Staying with a local family is a humbling experience and far more interesting than booking a room at one of the many hotels. Nights will be filled with laughter, smiles and delicious home cooked food.



The lush, green rice paddies of Ubud.



The iconic Cottesloe Beach, a lovely and scenic spot for a summer picnic.

Our top picks for ways to spend a hot summer's day!

• By Rosemary

You don't have to break the bank to make the most of this summer. Read on for our best suggestions! Free summer activities: **1) Go to the beach.** Here in Perth we're incredibly lucky to have such a beautiful coastline. It's a great day out full of sun, sand and good exercise. Bring a packed lunch or get everyone to bring something to share. **2) Go to the river.** The river is the perfect spot for a picnic or party with your friends or family. The grassy shores are an excellent place to enjoy a lovely summer's day. They also have plenty of barbecues provided by the council for general public use. **3) Go to the library.** Local libraries often host free activities that are available for the whole family to enjoy. **4) Go to a nearby park.** There are beautiful, shady parks scattered all over Perth. Organise an outing with your

friends and family for a fun filled day. This is good as it also exhausts the kids! **5) Check out the museums.** Often they have free exhibits and activities on offer. This is both interesting and educational. **6) Go to a market.** Even if you don't buy anything it's still fun to browse the stalls and admire the produce. Often there are free samples to try! **7) Search for free arts and crafts activities.** These are held all over the city. Check out places such as Bunnings, local church groups and community centres. **8) Go to Kings Park and the Botanic Gardens.** These are beautiful public areas to enjoy a lazy day out. With the spectacular views and open spaces it's an outing everyone can enjoy.

If you have a bit of money to spare here are some activities offering reasonable prices for everyone: **1) Go to The Great Escape in Hilarys.** This is a great place to take adventurous kids who love the

water! The nearby boat harbour also has a fun holiday feel to it and is surrounded by plenty of shops, cafés and restaurants. **2) Visit Perth Zoo.** The zoo is a popular and fun attraction for everyone to enjoy. You can learn a lot about animals and their different habitats. **3) Go to the Swan Valley.** A day trip to the Swan Valley shows you a whole different side to Perth. Go with your friends to sample wine and chocolates for a day of adult fun. **4) Take a day trip to York or Northam.** The country towns are lovely and peaceful, making you feel far away from the hustle and bustle of the city. **5) Movies at Kings Park.** Outdoor cinemas are one of Perth's most enjoyable summer activities. You can see all the latest blockbusters under the spectacular night sky. **6) Visit the iconic Fremantle Prison.** The day tours are informative while the night tours are fun and scary. Fremantle itself also has a great atmosphere.

Escapism with a comic twist

• By Melanie

The great thing about Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series is just how real the fictional world becomes. They are books which you can truly escape into, leaving behind the mundane nature of your everyday life. With each book you meet an array of new characters, as well as revisiting familiar ones. The characters are so well constructed that you even become fond of some of them. These amazingly funny books are filled with quirky in-

dividuals, from Rincewind the wizard, Commander Vimes of the Nightwatch (a sort of Police force), dwarves, princes and even Gods. One of the most interesting characters is Death himself. While ordinarily a figure out of nightmares he seems strangely likeable in these tales. He has a horse named Blinky, and an adopted daughter and grand-daughter. He appears in many of the *Discworld* novels, including *The Light Fantastic* and *Sourcery* to name a few.

Terry Pratchett's sense of hu-

mour is one of the things that make these novels so popular. For instance in *Sourcery* he writes, "I meant," said Ipslore bitterly, "what is there in this world that truly makes living worthwhile?" Death thought about it. "CATS", he said eventually. "CATS ARE NICE."

Yet, he also makes you think, exploring philosophical ideas about life and the universe. I would highly recommend his books for anyone looking for an entertaining, interesting and thought provoking read.

Hats off to Harry

• By Helena

J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series is without a doubt, a literary work of genius. Some people criticise her writing however I believe her creative, complex storylines are truly incredible. The intrigue of the wizarding world is irresistible, Rowling drawing us in to the magic of Hogwarts and beyond. I cannot recommend these books more for children and adults alike.

Pandemic guaranteed to cure cases of boredom

• By Aaron

When people get together to play a board game, chances are that someone is expecting to lose. But how often do you play a game where everyone can lose, yet enjoy the loss just as much as the win? In *Pandemic*, that situation is more likely than not.

Pandemic is a co-operative game, meaning all players are working together, to stop not one, but four different viruses from spreading and wiping out humanity. Each player starts out as a member of a disease control

group from Atlanta, each with different roles. These include occupations such as medic, researcher and scientist

You then travel around the hypothetical 'board world', collecting cards, building research stations, and quarantining sicknesses in the cities you visit until you manage to find a cure.

However, the game has other plans for you. While you are doing all this, the game will try to spread the diseases, create epidemics, cause outbreaks and try to overwhelm the characters before they can find the last, or even the first cure.

This may sound daunting, but *Pandemic* is possibly the only game in which all players can be wiped out in the same round, yet still have the time of their lives. Not only that, but *Pandemic* is a quick and easy to learn game for beginners or people who just don't play board games often. Player numbers range from two to four.

If you want to add a board game to your collection, *Pandemic* is a must have for any shelf. It is a great game that the whole family can sit down and enjoy together, whether they save the world, or die trying.

Pushing the limit

• By Brodie

Limitless is an A-grade movie that focuses around a man who is having a hard time publishing his books. He comes across his ex-wife's brother, an active drug dealer, who suggests he take a newly developed drug called 'NZT'. Unsure of the effects he hesitantly accepts the tiny white pill, taking it when he gets home. He soon realises that the pill allows him to use one hundred percent of his brain power. He finishes his book, cleans his dirty apartment and helps his neighbour with her study. When the drug wears off he goes to find his ex-wife's brother again, shockingly finding him dead in his apartment. He makes a quick departure, but not before stealing his bag of 'NZT'. He continues to take the pills, making a lot of money, getting into trouble with a very shady character and even meeting up with his ex wife! I thoroughly enjoyed this film however thought that at times the plot could have been explained better. Other than that it's a ten out of ten film!

Keys ready to set Perth Arena on fire

• By Brian

14 time Grammy award winner Alicia Keys will grace the stage of Perth Arena at 7:30 pm on Thursday December 5th 2013. Tickets to this once in a life time event have been on sale to the general public since September 20th 2013. For fans of music that has its roots in gospel and vintage soul, expect to be treated to an evening of musical artistry from one of the world's finest exponents of modern soul music. The songstress extraordinaire will perform some of her most popular hits including *If I Ain't Got You*, *Empire State of Mind*, *Girl on Fire* and many more.

Performing internationally since she came to prominence in 2001, Alicia Keys has gone on to record eight albums. Her notable albums *Songs in A Minor* sold over 12 million copies while her second studio album, *The Diary of Alicia Keys*, sold eight million copies worldwide. Her recent album *Girl on Fire* became Alicia Keys' fifth chart topping album in the United States. To date she has sold over 35 million albums and 30 million singles worldwide.

Billboard Magazine named Alicia Keys the top Rhythm and Blues songs artist of the 2000's decade. In 2010, VH1



The Alicia Keys tour poster. Photo courtesy of Perth Arena.

included Keys on its list of 100 greatest artists of all time while *Billboard Magazine* placed her at number ten on their list of Top 50 Rhythm and Blues/Hip Hop artists of the past 25 years. Her *Songs In A Minor* album won her five Grammy Awards in 2002,

including best new artist and Song of the Year for *Fallin'*. Two of her more memorable performances include United States President, Barack Obama's 2013 Inauguration Ball and the 2012 Super Bowl final, where she brought the house down with her rendition of *Star Spangled Banner*.

As an accomplished pianist, Keys blends this instrument with her amazing vocal range to produce powerful songs that are written about love, heartbreak and female empowerment. Her musical influences come from

great artists including Whitney Houston, Prince, Nina Simone, Barbara Streisand, Marvin Gaye, Quincey Jones and Donny Hathaway.

Alicia Keys' distinctive music style has its roots in gospel and vintage soul music, with ample fat bass accompaniment to compliment her musical style. Using a heavy blend of classical piano with rhythm 'n' blues, soul and jazz has developed a unique sound that is instantly recognisable to millions of listeners worldwide. She started experimenting with other musical genres, including pop and rock on her third studio album *As I Am*, transitioning from neo-soul to a more modern sound with her fourth album, *The Element of Freedom*.

Alicia Keys' amazing voice has a vocal range of a contralto that spans three octaves. She can sing from B flat over an octave below middle C to B below soprano C. Regularly described as the 'Princess of Soul', Keys has been lauded for having a strong, raw and impassioned voice.

Come December 5th, fans can expect to be seduced by the soulful voice of Miss Keys, on what should be a memorable night of entertainment. For more information go to pertharena.com.au

Taking sport to the EXTREME!



Skydiving involves literally throwing yourself out of a plane.

• By Vincent

Thanks to modern technology, extreme sports are no longer as simple as jumping off cliffs or scaling vertical rock faces. Today the word 'sport' takes on a whole new meaning, adrenaline junkies worldwide commissioning planes, cars, boats and other machines to help them in their quest to test the limits of human capabilities. Below is a summary of just some of the crazy sports on offer.

World Wingsuit League: Wingsuit flying is an extreme sport in which you wear an aerodynamic jumpsuit called a wingsuit which allows you to glide, manoeuvre in the air and perform aerial acrobatics. There is a race called the World Wingsuit League that takes place in China, participants descending from 1,500m cliffs and gliding through a one kilometre valley course in around 30 seconds.

Red Bull Air Race: Red Bull Air Race involves pilots flying their aeroplanes around a slalom course, doing tight turns

through pylons called air gates in a race against the clock. The goal of this race is to test the ability of the world's best pilots as it is not only about speed but also precision and skill.

F1H2O: F1H2O or the Formula 1 Powerboat World Championships is a spectacular water race sport that involves competitors traversing across a circuit marked by buoys. Each race lasts approximately 45 minutes and the courses vary in types from lake, river, dock or sheltered bay.

Volcano Boarding: Gliding along waves or snow just isn't enough for some people. That's why Cerro Negro mountain in Nicaragua is home to the new craze of volcano boarding, a sport which involves racing down the face of a 700 metre high active volcano on a board that can reach speeds of up to 80 kilometres per hour.

If these don't tempt you, you can also try extreme sports such as sky diving, parachuting, shark diving, hang gliding, freestyle poweriser stiling, extreme pogo, base jumping and crocodile bungee.

Keeping up with Formula One

• By Navid

Daniel Ricciardo was born in Perth in 1989. He is the always smiling Formula One driver who is set to replace Mark Webber in the Red Bull racing team. Webber, also Australian, has been with Red Bull since 2002. He has had nine wins and 38 podiums. He has been racing alongside German team mate, Sebastian Vettel for several years. The dynamic duo has bought home the Constructor's Championship for four consecutive years.

Vettel, the 2012 F1 champion, has his eyes on gold for this year, leading the score board with 247 points. This gives him a whopping 60 point lead over second place. He has become hugely famous, consistently outperforming this season's Mercedes and Ferrari teams with his precise yet aggressive driving style.

There has been growing tension between Webber and Vettel since the Malaysian Grand Prix incident, when during the final laps the two drivers were in first and second positions. They were

then told by the team manager to pace themselves in order to preserve their engines as there was no chance anyone could catch-up. Vettel ignored the orders, passing Webber to finish first. Webber has since declared he is retiring from Formula One racing to join Porsche.

Ricciardo is currently driving for Toro Rosso, Red Bull's secondary team. He was one of two candidates to make the 2014 Red Bull team, along with Kimi Raikkonen from Lotus. It was announced in early September that Ricciardo will drive for the Red Bull in 2014, keeping alive the hope of continuing to see an Australian flag on the podium. Red Bull team chief Christian Horner stated "he's got all the attributes that are required to drive for our team: he's got a great natural ability, a good personality and is a great guy to work with". Daniel Ricciardo said "Next year I'll be with a championship-winning team, arguably the best team, and will be expected to deliver. I'm ready for that."



Fitness not necessarily the key to becoming a successful sports person

• By Daniel

You don't have to be an elite athlete to be a 'sports professional'. There are plenty of realistic and attainable jobs for people who want to combine work with their passion for sport.

Perhaps most popular is a personal trainer or gym instructor. There are various different courses you can take to get quickly certified for these positions. Some of them are even available online. This is a highly rewarding position where you can help make a real difference to people's lives.

Another popular position is a physical therapist. Clients can range from local sports teams to world class A-teams. The major perk of this job is that you might get the opportunity to get up close and personal with a good looking footballer!

One of the less known sports related professions is a sports psychologist. In this role you help athletes focus on mental preparation to induce top performance. Many of the world's top athletes have sports psychologists to help them prepare for competitions.

If you're a high flyer with big am-

bitions you may be able to score a position as an agent. Agents look after the media and promotional sides of professional athleticism, helping gain sponsorship, contracts and endorsement deals. Most top athletes have agents to help them make the most of their fame and fortune. A lot of lesser known athletes also employ agents to help them become well known.

If you like photography, pursuing a career as a sports photo-journalist is a good option. You will often get VIP media access to events and an opportunity to get much closer to the fa-

mous athletes than the general public.

Event planner is another profession that is sports related. In this role you work behind the scenes to organise and plan sporting events and occasions. This can be anything from running local sports carnivals to being on the official Olympic committee.

While the job availability in these industries is not exactly booming, if you put your mind to it, these sports related careers are definitely possible for everyday people. They are varied and interesting, ensuring that every day at the 'office' is different.