

# MALA MESSENGER

*Newsletter of the Mature Adults Learning Association Inc. Rockingham Branch*

JUNE 2021

## FROM THE CHAIR

COVID capers still have us on our toes. It really does seem to be a day to day proposition. Thankfully we have managed to get Term Two completed without interruption. Hopefully now that the vaccine roll-out is speeding up we should be more confident about our chances for a trouble free Semester Two.

We are now embarking on “the long break”, a time I know many of you will miss the presence of MALA each Wednesday. Hopefully this will be our last mid-year drought. As of next year we will be adopting a different system of programming. The year will be broken into five segments. Semester One will offer three terms of courses each with one topic for each session time on offer. The semester will extend from early March until mid July. Semester Two will provide two terms of courses and run from late August to November.

Apart from the more even spread throughout the year a second advantage that lies in this system is that you will no longer have to choose between two topics of interest that occur at the same time.

Hopefully we can continue to provide presenters that you enjoy. Judging from the comments on our evaluation sheets all the course in Term Two had a high approval rating and gave great information and enjoyment to all. The next semester is looking good so far, more on that later.

Work on the Constitution continues with the committees on all three branches involved in the changes, but the final document will be sent out to all members as soon as we can manage it.

Stay safe, stay warm and stay well.

**Bronwen Usher**

**Chair**



*“I like cold weather. It means you get things done.”*

*Noan Chomsky*



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## MEMBER FEEDBACK

Re the Roll-up call for Term Two notice.

I have had a few people tell me that they found the section on Aboriginal Culture/Bhutan in that message to be offensive. The issues they expressed were that it was judgemental and not respectful to those who already had good knowledge of the issues, as many of you do.

I unreservedly apologise for any offense given. I had no intention of doing so, although upon reflection I can see how this could be read in that way. Many thanks to those of you who have taken the trouble to let me know as it shall certainly inform any future notices I prepare.

Editor



*"Life is like a game of cards, you can't change the cards you are dealt,  
but it is up to you how you play them."*

*Michael Kold*



## SEMESTER TWO TERM DATES

**Term 3 Enrolment Day - 21st of July**

**Classes – 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> of August and 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of September**



**Term 4 Enrolment Day – 22<sup>nd</sup> of September**

**Classes – 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of October and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of November**



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## **SEMESTER TWO COURSES**

### **A Peep ahead to the Second Semester**

Courses are not yet finalised but on the menu, so far, during the Semester are :

Philosophy with Meera Finnegan

Prof. Charles Oxnard with more Medicine and Science

Prof. Bob Mead brings us more Forensic Science

Prof. Michael Prince - topic to be decided

Dr Chris Meredith with the Implication of living in an Age of Knowledge Denial

Ronni Orlando with a New look at Old Composers

Jamie & Sebastian Van Jones with a combination of Geology and Environment

Prof Alexey Muraviev will be back - topic to be confirmed

And at the Autumn Centre Floral Art - Fun with Flowers can finally begin

Watch this space for more new of upcoming courses as work continues to fill all our courses.



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## BOOKSHELF

***“Popeye never told you”*** by Rodney Hall

*is a childhood memories of the war. This story is told for the innocent point of view of a child. Rodney’s father died when he was six months old just before the war began, leaving his mother with three young children to bring up. She had to go to work, and with the absence of a father the children had a lot of freedom to roam the streets and woods around them. At night their mother would tell stories of “home” in far off Australia. This magical place became Rodney’s hope of escape from the bombing.*

*The book is filled with wonderful stories giving a child’s impression of what was going on around him and of the wonderful brave and stoic woman that was his mother, all combine to make this an extraordinary book and a wonderful read. I really recommend it.*

Mike



***“The Raven in the Foregate”*** by Ellis Peters from the Cadfael Chronicles.

*I picked this book up while on holiday. It was a bit scruffy but as I had nothing else to read I read it. I am glad I did I really enjoyed it. It is basically an 11th Century ‘who done it’. The main character a brother, Cadfael, is left to sort out the complicated strands which will define guilt and innocence. The turbulent political times and lives of the ordinary people and their overlords are well drawn. It is an engaging ‘quick’ read. I enjoyed it so much I have sort out a couple of other books by Ellis Peters.*

John



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## **NOTICES**

**Many thanks to Mark Jolley of Jim's Tag and Test in East Rockingham  
for safety checking and certifying our urn without cost to us.**

**Thank you Mark we do appreciate your support for MALA.**



### **NAME TAG RETURN – or should I say – LACK OF RETURN**

**Of the 100 name tags that we began with we have only had a total of 58 returned this  
semester.**

**It is important that you hand in your name tag at the end of each semester. This enables us  
to make sure that everyone has a tag ready for the new courses. If you are not returning the  
following semester that is a name tag not available to those who do attend. We must  
provide name tags for everyone to comply with duty of care responsibilities and of course  
COVID regulations.**

**Please hand in any name tags you still hold on enrolment day.**



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## **WRITERS CORNER**

This time our writers tackled the topic of PAIN and what a wide spectrum they turned up. From the pain of loss, to the stages of pain that follow an assault to the very recognisable 'ouch' pain that childhood so often brought us.

Pain comes no more heartfelt than in the loss of child as Esther tells us.

### **PAIN AS A MOTHER - LOSS OF A CHILD**

The pain of losing a child no one can explain or know as deeply as a Mother, no matter what age their child may be.

I have always considered, and I feel sure, that my son passed away on Friday 29th April.

That day I had been invited to go to Parliament House to witness the swearing in of a new Senator, a 1st Nation man. It was a cold wet day and when I came home I decided to have a rest. While I was lying down I had a terrible pain in my chest so bad that I yelled to my younger son Patrick, who lives with me, that I had a terrible pain in my chest. He offered to take me to the hospital for a checkup, but after a good 15 minutes the pain had subsided and I decided not to go. I have never had that pain since.

On the following Sunday we tried to contact David, my elder son, without success. As he lived alone in Spearwood his father made a visit to his home. The security door was shut, but the lights and TV were still on.

It was on the Monday 2nd May, when Patrick who had a key to his brother's house, went there and found David deceased. I rang him to ask how our "Davey Boy" was, and Patrick told me that he had passed away. We are not sure just when he died but I am sure that it was not on the Monday, but the Friday previous.

I often think of him dying alone and suffering a thrombosis. I cope with the pain, by working hard and remembering him as he was. For five years now we have all missed the adventurous one in the family, his fun, and generosity of heart.



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Linda brings us a combination of Pain - not only the mere physical pain, but also and the mental anguish caused by the disapproval of a visiting mother-in law!!

### **How do I explain this to my disapproving mother-in-law?**

After a year of marriage this petite dynamo was visiting from New York with her widowed older sister Mary to teach me – not just the family recipes my new husband liked, but also how to clean, to shop, etc. etc.

We had recently moved to a house on the north side of the island rented from friends, a tropical paradise but cooler than being up the “mountain”. The front balcony looked into the treetops with a view of the ocean beyond, a steep slope lead down to an overgrown garden with possibly fruit trees peeking out from the jungle of vines and bushes.

We had decided to investigate, so with machetes in hand and dogs by our side my husband and I slashed our way down the hill. There were some amazing vines hanging from the trees. Finding an exceptionally thick one I pulled down on it, then lifting my feet off the ground tugged on it, it didn't budge, so I did what anyone would do. With a Tarzan yell I swung down the hill on the vine. You guessed it, the vine broke. It's amazing how time stops; every perception heightened - the smooth humidity of the air on my skin, the texture of the vine on my hands, the feeling of weightlessness, then not! With my tailbone landing on a rock the pain was immediate and excruciating. As I hobbled up the hill my thoughts revolved around not my agony but “How do I explain this to Mom?”



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From Marie Clair the changing face of pain as we heal and slowly recover from having faced a traumatic experience is very clearly and succinctly drawn.

## **PAINS**

Physical pain:

He's holding a knife to my throat. This can't be true! I always thought it would happen to someone else. Today it's happening to me, and I have to live through it...

He pushes me against the wall, my mouth is dry, I feel like a trapped animal. In French, I pray to God, in English, I beg the stranger to spare my life. We struggle, I fall on the floor, he sits on my chest his hands around my neck strangling me. I can't breathe, the pain hurts. I'm going to die... But I survive!

Emotional Pain:

With weeks going by, the numbness had replaced fear, I spend my time crying and replaying over and over in my head what happened. I want my mum! I need my husband, but he has to work.

Months later, good news, I'm pregnant! At last a small hope of recovery. But yesterday I had a miscarriage, I lost my baby. Today, empty and alone I'm rocking myself into depression...

Growing Pain:

I won't let the stranger win! But I don't know how to win. Then I remember words spoken a long time past, 'we came to this earth, to observe, to experience, to learn and grow' and then we leave'. I wish I could leave now, but I have a young child to take care of...

Healing was a slow process, I learned about myself, and grew, by turning a negative experience into a positive lesson. In the end, I think I won!



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For those of us lucky enough to have had access to horses as children you will particularly identify with Jan as she brings us – a childhood recount of one second of inattention that brought years of pain

### **FLAT OUR AND FAR FROM HOME- A true account**

It was August 1972, late afternoon, the air was cooling quickly and the smell of wood fires hung in the air., Joee (my horse) and I wound our way through the streets, crossing playing fields to get home before dark.. I rode bare back; I had a saddle but enjoyed the “seat” better – the closeness of being at one with my best friend.

We plodding across a low-lying playing field, Joee ever aware of his surrounds, turning his head and pricking up his ears to the random sounds but my focus lapsed for a moment and I didn't see the two dogs bounding towards us until it was too late to gather the reins and prepare for a “bolt”. Joee took off – galloping across the field I held on tight with my legs, tried to keep calm and talk him down from the fright. I grasped the reins on the left side to pull him into a tight circle and he flipped around so quickly I was flung to the ground landing flat on my back

Everything stopped. The dogs were called by the owners and they all disappeared. I waited. I had felt the pain of hitting the ground, then strangely, I felt nothing. I was in shock and thought I was paralyzed. Racing thoughts filled my head – What if..., What if .. What if ... I can't get home? Pain started in my back and bum. I wiggled my toes and I tried to lift my arms, but my back hurt more. I felt very alone and scared.

Joee now stood quietly. It wasn't the first time we had been in this predicament so he knew the drill. I mustered the deepest breath I could—and let rip – HEEELLPPPPP!! I heard voices in the distance so I yelled again. A couple appeared. The man took Joee from my grip and the lady asked me to wiggle my toes and fingers. It did hurt but she got me up. Moving was hard, but I took hold of the reins and assured my rescuers I was sort of ok. I set off home and reached there after a long agonizing hour.

Nobody was worried that I was late, they hadn't even missed me at dinner, because I quite often spent every daylight hour with Joee. Kids had a lot of freedom and independence back then. I just said I had had a tumble off Joee and was going to bed.

I felt like crap. Blades of grass from the oval still pressed into my skin. I thought Mum would pop in and see if I was OK! But no. I laid still all night – the pain was solid and unrelenting. Finally, I managed to get up and recount the incident to Mum. I spent the next three days in bed.

The pain remained quite a significant feature of my life for many years, the winters were worst. I never knew for sure what I had hurt but my guess was a broken coccyx.

In a bizarre twist to this story many years later, whilst giving birth to my first daughter, I heard this almighty bang as her head passed through the birth canal and for the first time since that day I felt no pain.



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“Ouch” pain is a hazard of childhood. I am sure many of you have tales of your own of such pain and will identify with this offering from Bronwen.

### CUNDERDIN HILL

Another carefree day in my 9 year old life, holiday freedom, mates and Billy’s hill trolley. Cunderdin Hill is not high, but deceptively steep with a gravel track leading to the top. Eagerly I jumped into Billy’s hill-trolley and pushed off. Sheer exhilaration, powered me down the hill until a deep pothole caught the left front wheel, shearing it off, sending it flying into the scrub. I flew too.

My world tumbled and spun, the sky was in the wrong place, everything was going faster, sounds wobbled as air speed past me. Whoomp, the air completely knocked out of me when the ground rushed up to meet me.

Skin ripping from my hands, arms, now exposed torso, and thighs, I cannoned down the gravel track. Seemingly forever I grated along, skin flailing from my body, before I lay still in a heap of pure pain. Winded, I had no breath to scream, yell or even sob. The universe was red with pain. I became vaguely aware of the noise of panicked yelling. I just couldn’t move, I waited for the world to stop spinning and hurting.

Ned appeared. Gently lifting me he began a low rhythmic chant which together with his long black legs carried me the half mile home. As gently as they could Mum and Ned dug out the gravel that had burrowed into my skin and bathed the disaster zone. I was still in shock, I couldn’t even cry out loud or complain, but big hot tears squeezed from my eyes and streaked my face with a salty crust.

The next week was a blizzard of pain, dark puce bruising joined the party on my battered body, but as with everything in life, it passes. After a couple of weeks I was on the mend with the torment of the itch as the grazes healed the worst of it.

It was not all bad though, I had gone up in town’s kid respect league table. My stunned silence had been mistaken as courage!



Thanks again writers I know you are reviving a few memories in many of our members.

Thanks too to those of you who have taken time to tell us you appreciate their efforts.



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## THAT'S ALL FOLKS



*"If all misfortunes were laid on one common heap whence everyone must take an equal portion, most people would be contended to take their own and depart."*

*Socrates*



– It may have been said a long time ago, but it is as true today as ever.

With Winter Sales all about us I will leave you with a final tip from Frank Hubbard. The best way to double your money is to fold it over once and put it in your pocket.

**Bronwen Usher**  
Editor

