

ALMOST ALL CONTRIBUTORS TO "ROOMERS" ARE RESIDENTS OR FORMER RESIDENTS OF ROOMING HOUSES, PRIVATE HOTELS OR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION IN PORT PHILLIP

ROOMERS

BY RESIDENTS FOR RESIDENTS

Issue 41 ~ 2010 **free**

MEMORIES



&

DREAMS

What is Roomers?

Almost all contributors to Roomers are local residents or former residents of rooming houses, private hotels or supported residential services in St.Kilda, South and Port Melbourne and Elwood.

The Roomers Project recruits local writers, artists, photographers, journalists and cartoonists to work as volunteer mentors with contributors.

Mentors meet with resident contributors to assist them with their creative material. Roomers is distributed free to residents of rooming houses, private hotels and supported accommodation across the City of Port Phillip.

If you would like to become a contributor or mentor please contact Esther on 0413 024 528 or leave a message on 9531 1954 or write to: PO Box 57 Elwood 3184 or send us an email: roomersmag@yahoo.com.au

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thanks to

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Jim May
And our many new mentors to be introduced soon

and our supporters:

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Tony Birch
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There's no way we could do it without you.

WRITING WORKSHOPS

Come meet with other like minded people. Try some writing exercises. Our workshops are super friendly and open to all levels. No experience needed.

**Every Monday
from 1pm – 3pm
In the Community Room
At the St Kilda library**

intro

The theme of this issue of Roomers is a broad one: memories and dreams. We pay tribute to Andy Dowd, a Roomers contributor who passed away at the end of last year. Andy was a wonderful artist, a great musician and a budding writer who really enjoyed our writing workshops. Most of all, he was incredibly community minded. Working together on our radio play project we could all see how Andy always thought of what the group needed, not just himself. And we love and miss the wit and care Andy brought to everything he did.

This issue also includes other tributes to friends of the Roomers community. As I put it together I was touched by how many people took the opportunity to write about a friend or lover who had died. The results are very moving, and somehow whether you know the person or not, they give you a chance to reflect on what's important.

There are many other memories in here too – happy ones and times that were pretty rough. Each piece of writing gives you a little peek into what's going on in someone else's head. That's the great thing about reading; it opens us up to other people and new ideas.

This is my last issue as Roomers editor as I'm heading off for some travelling time. I want to thank everyone in the rooming house community – especially Roomers contributors and readers – for sharing your ideas and world with me. I will be taking a whole lot of amazing memories with me.

Keep writing,
Esther
Roomers Worker

for Helen

by Jo Hennessy

I loved the way her eyes lit up,
When her dogs entered the room,
I loved the way I always knew,
My friend would call me soon.

I loved spending time in silence,
Just as I loved our talks,
Sharing our pain, our joy and our hopes,
On the separate paths we walked.

I loved her for her thoughtfulness,
Her generous state of mind,
I loved her consideration,
She was honest and she was kind.

I loved the way she'd say 'take care',
Every time that we'd part,
Her deep brown eyes making it clear,
The words came straight from her heart.

I loved her joy of simple things,
The birds, the flowers, the sea,
I feel privileged that she shared her love,
Of simple things with me.

I loved that I could trust her,
What I shared she'd never tell,
I loved that even when she was hurting,
She still truly wished me well.

I loved that she shared her tears with me,
When her sadness got her down.
I loved that she never pretended with me,
Didn't smile when she wanted to frown.

I loved the way she nurtured her kids,
Cheered them on as they grew,
She did her best to meet their needs,
Encouraged them to be true.

I loved her passion for music,
Each lilting melody.
Through music she could feel,
And through music she could see.

I loved her for her integrity,
Her compassion and her care,
She was the one I could always turn to,
Knowing she'd always be there.

It's not how we die that defines us,
It's the trail we leave behind.
The people we touched and gifts we gave,
The legacy left to find.

She's in the arms of angels now,
It's where she's meant to be.
She now has peace and clarity,
As she's held tenderly.

So rest your weary head my friend,
For your journey's been so long,
I know you're back with God now,
Back where you belong.

My friend I miss you dearly,
But it's time to say good-bye,
I will borrow your angel wings,
So we both can reach the sky.

Memories of David

by Wendy Butler



David aged 21, before the demon drink got to him

Fitzroy Street Roomers are in shock at the untimely death of local rooming house identity David Rodakis. David had lived at the Gatwick Private Hotel on an off for the last twenty years and his friendly face was a welcoming presence in the foyer.

He was a friendly and generous man who would give up his bed to anyone who needed it. The place is not the same without him.

Wendy Butler

He was my best friend, my drinking mate. The only true friends he had were the kooris.

Love from the Wise family, Christine and family.

To David,

What are you going to be when you grow up?

Teach them a thing or two in heaven.

Keep drinking. Have some for us?

Look down on all those that were genuinely your friends and protect us.

Love Kelly.

To David,

WTF? Why hurt a national treasure? Someone who wouldn't hurt a fly. He is a great person and someone who'll always be here and never forgotten.

From Damien

Dave:

You are in my heart, I miss your cheeky smile. Thanks for being my friend.

RiP. Gone too soon.

Delwyn Block

David Rodakis 1944 - 2010

In Search of TRUTH

by Simon Sewell

Always distrust used car salesmen, insurance salesmen. In fact, any salesmen.

Distrust any opinion other than your own.

You are always right.

Forget about monogamy, there is no one love for anyone so embrace polygamy.

Forget about diets. You can eat as much caviar and drink as much champagne as you wish without ill effect. And think of all that Omega 3.

Drive the most pretentious car that you cannot quite afford.

Listen to all gossips and compare them, bit by bit. Then discuss them with others for comparison.

One day it may come to you.

Truth will out.

Jolt Not My Fault

by Jenny Ling

You wandered into my life
After I liberated you
The bond we shared
Would last my whole life through
In the journey of my life
We shared beer, barbeques and joints
I electrocuted you, after I bit off more than I could
chew
I was bored and bit through the cord
You got a jolt
I guess it was my fault

You called me a little bastard
I was sad
You got over it
I was glad

You protected me from harm and were my friend
I thank you for that
Sorry it had to end

WHO AM I

by Estell Carew

I Live, Breathe, Eat and Shit...
But, who Am I?
I can procreate.
Adding to the population of my country.
But who am I?
I can point to all the waste,
And say "I helped produce that"
But who am I?
I am part of a community
That does all of these things.
But, who am I?
What am I?
Who are we?
Even the scientists with all their huff and
bother...
Can't answer those questions.
I laugh, Cry, Think and Smile...
That's who I am.
I am Estell.

For Sheldon, in memory of Woodstock Nov 08



by Dave Faulkner

runaway

by Jo Hennessy

As a child I dreamt of running away, escaping to a world of books and fairytales. To castles with loving queens and fairy rings. To boarding schools with midnight feasts and bosom buddies. To magic trees with lands of dreams and where wishes really do come true. To storybook families where if the bad man came, Mum would save the day.

In real life when I ran, the darkness closed in around me as the lights in the houses turned off one by one, rejecting me from their promise of warmth, love and comfort. My friends, whose runaway fantasies were just a game, would turn me over to their reluctant parents. Adults who refused to believe a terrified child and were unable to hear what wasn't being said. 'It can't be that bad,' they would say, as they sent me back to hell.

In real life, there was nowhere to run.

As an adolescent my dreams matured. I dreamt of drifting from town to town, travelling on a whim. I contemplated the bright lights of Kings Cross, welcoming me as one of their own for I sensed this was where the misfits belonged. My white knights became truck drivers inviting any drifter that would open their legs in return for a ride. It's so very true that freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose. No ties means that no-one cares. Freedom is the loneliest place to be found in the whole world.

The lights stayed bright but the streets still turned chilly. Lovers were simply rapists in disguise. Truck drivers fed me bad speed and dumped me on the side of the highway at their convenience. My wants became my needs and the warm embrace of drugs became the icy cold breath of addiction.

'There is no-one with less choices than a prostitute on the street working to support their habit,' Germaine Greer once said. And for many years that is what I became, a prisoner, trapped in a cell of my own making. As I was drowning, I started waving and clung to life's rocky shores. I gasped for breath, swam like hell, and landed in suburbia.

I now stand on the rugged cliff of life. Securely wedged on my solitary wedge yet staring in terror at the horrors behind me, waiting expectantly to be swept back into it's stormy midst.

I'm told I'm safe now yet still I want to run. A sensation of dread grips me tightly in my chest, freezing me in it's formidability. Do I dive back into the turbulence, meeting it head on before it sweeps me away in a moment of complacency? Do I creep into other crevices searching for the answers I crave?

If I choose to run now, I run with the knowledge that safety is always fleeting, that answers will often be met with more questions and that one by one, the houses will always, turn out their lights.

DEPRESSION

by Lindsay Learhinan

I was born on a full moon and the wind howled...
Pieces of the sky came tumbling down...
There was confusion all around...
The earth shook and the wolves howled...
Thunder struck as the sky lit up...
The clouds frowned as the sky cried...
The sea boiled and coiled up in fear...
The skies cried out... and held its head in shame...
My Mother cried in pain...
Wise men wept... they couldn't understand...
The mountains steamed and the lakes boiled...
Sulphur rained down in a shroud of smoke...
Minds began to fail... in the midst of a freezing gale...
Wise men spoke... but no one could hear...
Their minds were numb... trapped in fear...
All held was gone... in emptiness of time...
And as the sun turned blood red...
Blind men claimed they could see... visions of what was to be...
They spoke of a black light shining in the night...
As God put out the light...
I cried out..
Oh Mother... don't give me birth...
Oh Mother... don't give me birth...
Oh Mother... don't give me birth...

the day my life changed

by Debbie Lustig

The little mahogany cabinet was flush to the wall. Ingrained on its curved front were narrow, pale gold edgings; handles in the shape of petals adorned its two drawers. Exotic and beautiful, its patina glowed with a deep, plummy red.

There was no other furniture in the room but an upright piano. A stout woman sat before it, rendering familiar nursery rhymes, banging with big hands. The room was full of children, swaying and hopping on the polished wood floor. Everything collided: the chaos of the children, the elegance of the graceful antique, the thump of the music's bass part.

My mother lifted me into her arms and we watched the children as they jumped to the music like clunky birds. I knew I'd been brought here to join in and the knowledge fell on me like a blow. If I could

only stay with my mother, maybe life as I knew it would stay the way it was, our days predictable, with kindergarten, vegemite sandwich lunches and helping pod the peas for our family's dinner.

She exchanged a look with the woman and began moving around the room, skirting the dancing children and heading for the cabinet. I held my arms tighter, screwing my eyes into her neck, feeling the tightness of her muscles. She prised me away and sat me on the cabinet, saying, "Happy first day at school, Debbileh. You won't miss me one bit." And with that, she strode out.

I swung my legs angrily against the now-hated cabinet. Its wood had become blood red and it was an instrument of torture. There was nothing for it but to try and act like *them*.

Travelling Man

a song lyric by MaryGrace Levakis

I'm a travelling man
I've got no ties
Just got no ties
I'll tell you no lies
Truly don't want no ties

Now the reason why
My reason why
These ties, they form into a knot
And knots are not
What I'm looking for

I'm a travelling man
I've got no ties
Just got no ties
I'll tell you no lies
Truly don't want no ties

I'm looking for new faces
and fresh, open spaces
No bored, locked up faces
No high rise office boxes
Which put you right to sleep



artwork by MaryGrace Levakis

3 Poems

by Andy Dowd

3 Days Without Prozac

3 days without Prozac
And I'm in my bed,
Covers over my head.
Then from my doona womb, I heard a noise.

At first I thought it was traffic,
So I resumed my self pity in my sad sack bed.
But then I realized and jumped to my feet,
Opened the window and took a deep breath.

One moment I'm in bed stoking my pain,
The next I'm up dancing to the sound of rain.
Heavy gnarly chubby rain.
The kind you know will last all day.

Back into bed with a smile,
And the perfect excuse to stay there a while.
I lay back and wonder why I need a pill,
To stand up to whatever the new day brings.

Maybe I'll just buy a recorder,
And lay down some tracks of meteorological
disorder.

They say keep it simple stupid.
How simple can you get
The sound of rain can ease my pain,
But I haven't told the doctor yet.

A Better Place

The kingdom of the heart and mind,
Is not so hard to find.
Fill your days with love and grace,
To the world show your true face.

Truth from within will guide you.
To make a better world if you have virtue
Look hard into your heart,
and decide,
Am I good or bad.

Easy as that?
Alas, no.
For your actions everyday,
will decide your fate.
Have you made this world,
your world, our world.
A better place?

And at the end
If your conscience is at peace
You are a man who made the world
A better place.

City Boy

Out of service,
The lift on the left.
Smells like vomit and farts,
The lift on the right.

No choice but go back outside
Take a deep breath of fresh city air,
Where the cars smell like farts
And the garbage bin like vomit.

Acclimatised I try again
Take the lift on the right
To my penthouse above

The traffic struggles
The buildings just stand
A couple of trees look like they need a hand

I tried living in the country,
But the silence was deafening.
And the public transport,
Not worth mentioning.

I'm a city boy.
It's in my blood.
I've got the lead levels to prove it.

Andrayous

by Michael Parker

Andy Dowd was my next door neighbour and friend. I spoke with Andy only minutes before he was murdered by a brutal coward.

The last image I have of Andy is of him throwing me a packet of Peter Stuyvesant cigarettes. "Posh c@#! Thanks Andrayous." I said as I caught the pack.

Andy just smiled that fuckin likeable smile. He didn't just smile with his mouth or his face, he smiled with his eyes! A real genuine, alive smile.

Andy was a very talented, imaginative painter, a very good guitarist - yes, even better than me - and a photographer as well. A real loss to the people who knew him and to those who never will. All because of a senseless cowardly act.

You live on "Andrayous," in the hearts of many, many good people. I still have one cigarette in that pack. When we, who all miss that smile, get justice, I will light that cigarette and enjoy it too.



Andy while working on the Roomers video project and our radio play at 3cr. Photos by Marion Lee

the colour of **BLACK**

by Paul Whitby

Poets are such a gripey,
Whingey, mealy-mouthed bunch;
They hint at hidden depths
They don't have,
Allude to grand knowings
When there are none to know

Penny-pinching,
Self-serving,
Self-obsessed poets
Endlessly
Peddling their wares.

When the soviets put their poets in the Gulag,
They loved it.
It was the first square meals they'd ever seen!
Not to mention the vindication:
What joy for a poet
To have an authentic excuse for self-pity!

How many poets
Does it take to change a light-bulb?
Why change anything when you can
Sit in the dark and whinge,
Looking for adjectives to describe the colour of black
Ad-nauseum?

And nausea it is.
I am nauseous.
I am the poet and author of my own nausea.

From the moment I saw her, I knew it was true.

Yes those eyes are the windows to the soul, or at least to the trained observer. Oh hell there goes that logical explanation once again, for that love and compassion coupled with confusion was all so exhilarating to me. Oh God free us from the bondage of self.

by Ashley Miller

Memories

Estell Carew

The feel of wool as it runs through your fingers, as you click, click, click, on your needles. To run your hands through the warm sand on the beach as the waves crash onto the shore. To put your fingers on the wrist of another and feel the pulse beat, throbbing as the blood flows through. To press against the stings of a guitar and feel them vibrate out notes as you pluck and strum. These to me are just memories.

Now I watch for sores as the numbness spreads, but still I can feel the sharpness of a knife, the prongs of a fork and the feel of mud squishing through my fingers and cold and hot.

So I am glad, privileged.
Others aren't so lucky.



by MaryGrace Levakis

all you need is **LOVE**

by Martine Rigby

Love of a lover

Being in love with someone, the butterflies, the thrill of just being together, kisses and kidding. The strange chemical attraction that you don't have with just anyone you meet. The safeness, the excitement for no real reason. The incredible heart pain after a disagreement or split. The relief of reuniting? Love?

Love of a family

A parent a sibling a cousin an aunt a grandparent, a feeling of belonging, being apart of, an identity, the being protected and protective. Being able to ask your mum about a worrying question and know she'll give you her best advice-whether you like it or not! The familiarity of a brother, a sister, a cousin you've known all your life.

Love of a friend

A confidant, a secret-keeper. Someone you can tell anything to and they to you. Someone to grow up with, or have met along the way. A travel companion or someone you can just sit and laugh with. Be silly and serious with, someone you can be yourself with.

Love of mother nature

The blue sky and the deep breath of a fresh perfect morning. The trees and the smell of newly cut grass on a Sunday morning. The colours of a patch of flowers, the fruits and veggies and herbs. The insect world, animals and birds. The gift of knowledge and enlightenment. Of awakesness if we take it. The offer of peace and balance.

Love of a pet

The love of the unconditional accepting pet that lives for you. The snuggles and the cuddles, the one way conversation that they completely understand and agree with! The eye contact to our souls and the mental telepathy they seem to have. The dog that brings you your shoes and nearly turns inside out with joy when you get home. The cat that meows at your arrival, headbutts your leg, purrs around you and will move a little on the couch to make room for you to sit down too. I have a friend who has a rabbit, Lyle, who is quite partial to sit on her couch in front of the air-con. Tell me they're not human! Tell me a happy dog doesn't smile! They make you happy, they make you laugh. Content. Needed. They don't want much and they complete my day.

Uneasy Guests

by M. R. Wilson

Welcome Mr. & Mrs. Davis. Your room is now ready. If you need anything I'm Ed or Mr. Ed if I go to the races. Here's your room key. So you won't feel safe. The keys fit most of the hotels doors, so the police can plant evidence while you're out.

I hope you sleep comfortably in your bed; you may hear the odd shot or scream. Nothing to worry about. If you need a can of coke there's a vending machine on each floor. If you need other coke, there's a junkie on each floor too. Speed can be purchased at our reception, BYO's = Bring Your Own straw.

If you need a change of bed linen mid week, our service lady will give you the sheets, she gives me the shits too. Some days we are a water conserving hotel, so please, take a bar of soap to bed with you. When the fire alarm goes off, the sprinklers come on and the residents love a bed bath/shower. Well, that's about everything covered, enjoy your stay. You're not welcome back anytime. Thank you. Mr Ed.

time to talk

by Jack Chadwick

Up and down the rocky firebreaks that separate the bush, I rode my XR 250 for three years. Even though that bike was road worthy, I rode my pushy to get me around. 'Been doing this since I was a kid.

Now, at 15 years old, we are allowed to go for car and bike licences. So I summoned up a little courage and applied.

Reckon I'd pass the practical, the written ... umm, at a push, yes: I've studied the road code and should pass that, but, I will have major difficulties with the five oral questions.

Right ... passed the written, now into the oral questions.

A Ministry of Transport biker guy: neat and clean in a well pressed uniform, is sitting opposite me. I am freaking. I have not been this close to a traffic cop before - he oozes authority, staunch maleness and seems to be capable of doing anything at a moment's notice. The look on his face suggested that taking kids for their license was way beneath him. I failed, I couldn't talk. I could ride and sort of write, but, not talk.

In the end it took me nine goes to stop sweating and to calm down. I didn't give up - even though I was afraid of the big bad uniformed man.

Finally. The practical test: passed it - piece of piss.

bubble

by Paul Harper

bubble

the white data is snow

the liquid
probably a river

the wooden & textile data a fishing pole
the metallic
a hook

flesh lifts hook
lifts house
on to snow

far above there is a small wooden room
on each white wall a black & white photograph of the moon

dragonfly

Martine Rigby

Dragonfly, you looking at me?
You fly and buzz so freely
Around my head and land so near
You look at me without any fear.

Do you want some of my vegemite toast?
Would you like some of my tea?
Do you want to know what I am reading?
Or just be here with me?

I wonder about you too, you know
And all you friendly bugs
I put out fresh water and some crumbs
And sprinkle welcome on the shrubs.

Where are you going dragonfly
Your species seems so rare
So lovely to see you zoom around
Amongst my city air.

Lily

by Dee

It was at Laverton. I have a vague memory of an Aboriginal child from Katherine in the Northern Territory. Mum & Dad decided to foster a child from the flood stricken Katherine, I was only 8 at the time. I don't remember how she came to our house, but, suddenly she was there. She was called Lily.

I remember a tricycle she played with by herself. I would look at her from around the corner of the house. My three younger siblings wanted to play with it and would start an argument about it. Mum told us to let Lily have it, they then ran off & left her alone with it.

The day came when Lily had to return home. We sat at Spencer Street station and had our first can of Passiona with three straws, one for me, one for Lily & one for my sister.

That's the last memory I have of her. Now I am amazed that the authorities would allow such a dysfunctional family to foster a child at all. She only stayed a week.

Laurel & Hardy

by Philip Brunt

Just finished cleaning the room I had moved into in Balaclava and was thinking the usual thoughts when moving into a new rooming house. Like, "Was what I was told fact, that it was a quiet place with no drunken lunatics?" When – what the fuck was that? Put my head out the doorway and there are these two blokes walking down the hallway to the back of the place. "Who in God's name were they?" I say to myself and proceed to follow them down.

These two have now proceeded down to the end of the hallway and outside. Just who the devil are they? One of them is well over six feet and the other about five feet. The tall one is very skinny and the other definitely rotund in stature. Out in the back yard is one of those big spinning clotheslines and these two are proceeding to walk around it, the tall one in front and the other, directly behind. They walk around the clothesline once, twice and proceed on till they have been around ten times.

"This can't be true!", I say, expecting them to walk out the back gate and down the driveway. They can't be staying here, surely. I move into the kitchen to get a better view. But, no, that's not their agenda at all. That seems to be back into and down the long hallway.

song

by Paul Harper

he wakes up singing

obama

obama

obama

he remembers

bicycle v skateboard on a gippsland footpath

arcades of berne

sunlight of zurich

snow

on mountains

for now

he remembers being less charming clothed

at a CBD eatery

than a little earlier naked at a bus stop

I follow them down and they proceed to the end and out the front door, down the driveway and then turn right down the road. The tall one remains in front, and the other directly behind. Neither making any conversation nor deviating from this positioning. Also I noticed that neither of them are moving their arms as these remain rigid at their sides.

John, a friend of mine who also lives here has come out, and I say to him "Did you see that?" "I saw them walking out the driveway, it was the craziest sight I've seen for awhile, that's for sure!" He replies.

By this time, these two have turned the corner and disappeared from sight, never to be seen by myself again. Just who were these two? Where did they come from? Where did they go? John assured me that he had never seen them before.

I thought to myself, "Well at least this crazy pair is not staying here!" But then again, knowing rooming houses as well as I do, they would most probably have been the best of tenants!

future

by Brigitte Belcourt

The future is always secure if you have faith,

Marathons always difficult to do.

Cheating leads you nowhere.

If you have what suits you,

You are always happy.



photo by Debbie Lustig

DONNA MITCHELL

14.07.73-13.08.07

by Michael Parker

What a day, what a day it was, that day.
I just gotta say, that day, we first met in that room,
And you, on the floor, when I walked in
That door, and saw, yeah; I saw, You! Sleeping.
And I, was waiting, trying, peeping;
“Who is she?”
“Just a friend” said my friend.
“Who?” said I, and then, fi-nally you, you, you,
B-You-t-full You!
Showed your face, your eyes!
And I was hypnotized,
And you, too. Mesmerised while you, and I,
Could not take, our eyes away.
For not one, two, three, four but
Five. Five moments of eternity.
What a day, what a way, that day.
I just gotta say, that day, we first met;
And, for-ever more you and I, would be,
As, one.
True love - what a fright!
What a sight!
You, sleepy eyed, and me, hypnotised
By you, and you,
Mesmerised,
While you, and I, our B-You-t-full eyes,
Locked together, for-ever, until, that day,
You. Died.
Together for-ever, until, that day, that day,
When you, in my arms, you, died.
It’s a cliché, I know. But it happens, to be so.
A fact. It just happens, to be so.
You, B-You-t-full you!
“A one of a kind”, and that day, that day!
When you, in my arms, looking into my eyes,
And I, into your eyes
While you, yeah you, B-You-t-full you, in my arms,
That day, you, passed,
Away, away, away, away
So, so, far,
Away, away, that day, yeah that day when you,
B-You-t-full, you.
Died.
I just gotta say, that day, when you, B-You-t-full You,
Died in my arms
You You! died. That day. I just had. To cry.
To cry. To cry, be-coz we, had, to say, goodbye.
That day.
That day! When you! You! In my arms – died.

Emotionally wins the

by D.H.

To begin a personal account of “highlights” of my mental health service consumption, I’ll quote Rowan Atkinson from 1981:

“Life, is one of those things that most people find difficult to avoid.”

There are many things to write about. In 1979 my first hospitalization was Royal Park. I discovered by accident that “You’re a schizophrenic also.” This from a psychiatrist I saw weekly for about 2 – 4 minutes. Apparently five years earlier my clinic doctor had told my parents: “schizophrenia.” He had assumed they’d told me. They’d assumed he’d told me – but hadn’t. It followed five years being paranoid and roaming around without medication.

In our mostly male family there was some sort of realization that a predisposition would dog the males. Also, some high achievements. If you’ve had three decades since your last girl-friend you would have had plenty of time to suss out just what aspects of loving relationships to look for platonically.

Each time I was a psychiatric ward inpatient I broke down in tears. Which I found to be a great emotional release. On one occasion a younger woman gave me a hug and said something like “It’s enough to make a grown man cry.” That was Larundel, mid-1980s. If you needed to lie down you were free to choose the floor. In fact, that hospital, being in it, was a real insult. There was also a sarcastic, game playing nurse.



photo by Debbie Lustig

articulate day

Twice over the years at different hospitals, each time an older nurse, jokingly told me they would not let me go because I was a model patient. It irked me at the time. Still, I can relate to it as a compliment.

An anti-highlight has been that in hospital I can relate intellectually ok but emotionally am left for dead. Crying in hospital is my best emotional experience there. Next best is to relate socially with nurses, patients and visitors.

I can state that:

- If I had married before my diagnosis was made clear to me
- If I had a steady job
- If I had children, a house, mortgage, taxes to pay, mother in law, lawns to mow

my life probably wouldn't include publications in maths journals, Life Membership of Australian Conservation Foundation or anything else hypothetically different.

There's a song with the lyric "Make the best of the bad, just laugh it off, you didn't have to come here anyway." (Every Picture Tells a Story, Rod Stewart.)

At some places I've visited I'm called a toff. I think it means being educated. The point of difference, regular vs. educated, is more like a function of an independent variable. Being emotionally articulate and responsible wins the day.



photo by Debbie Lustig

Community Info

Free fruit and vegies

Every Monday at 2:00 pm the Port Phillip Community Group gives away fruit and vegies.

Just come to 161 Chapel St, St Kilda, opposite Homeground. People start to queue outside from 1:30 pm.

The food is reclaimed by Second Bite from South Melbourne Market. You can get food every second week according to the last number on your CRN (odd or even). Drop in and check which week to come. Oh, and don't forget to bring a bag for all the goodies!

Roominations

Radio for the rooming house and homeless community.

Every Thursday from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm on radio 3CR. 855 AM

Exercise and get fit!

Make a new start and meet new people by joining in one of these low-cost activities:

- Gym & Swim
- Tennis
- Bushwalking
- Swimming

Suitable for all capabilities and some transport available. Contact Shayne on 9534 0777 or drop in to the St Kilda Community Centre at 161 Chapel St Kilda.

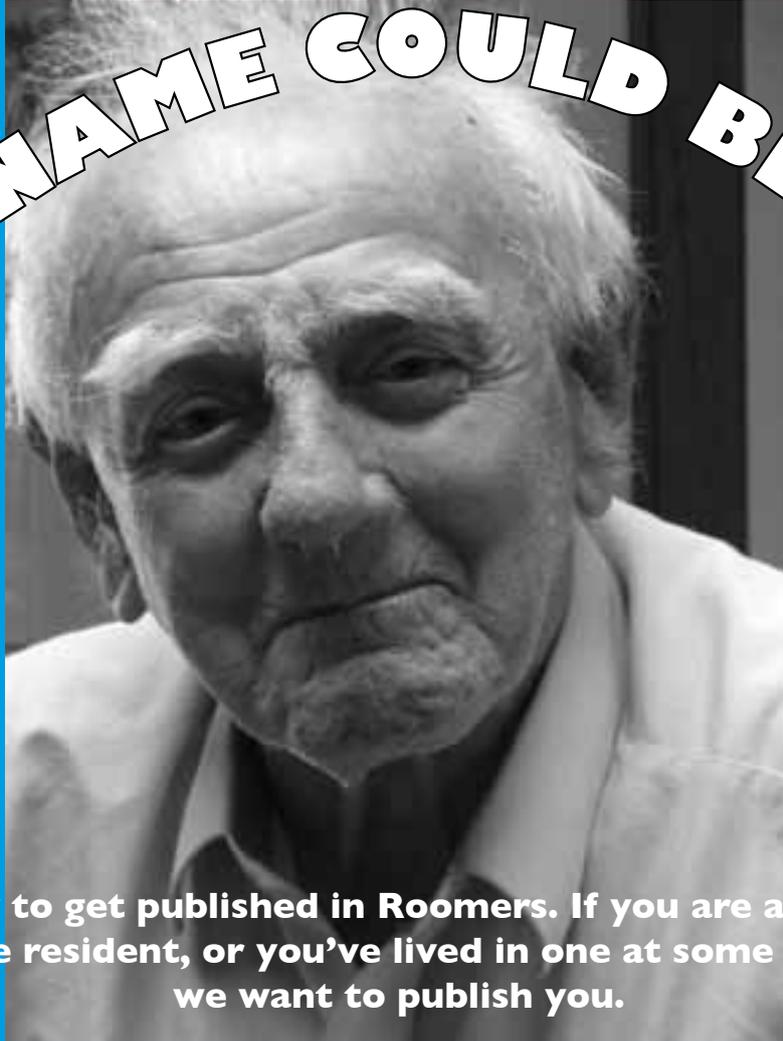
Homeless memorial

Once a year we come together as a community to honour and remember people who have died while homeless, or because of it. This is the night of the Homeless Memorial. The Homeless Memorial is held on the evening of the winter solstice. It includes indigenous dancing, writing in a memorial book, planting a memorial tree, telling stories and sharing food.

The 10th Homeless Memorial will be on Wednesday June 23rd 2010 at the Peanut farm at 4.30 pm.

If you'd like to be involved in organising this year's memorial please join the working party. Contact Deb McIntosh on 0422 372610 to find out more.

YOUR NAME COULD BE HERE!



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