

THE COMET

Journal of the Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' League, Qld. Inc.



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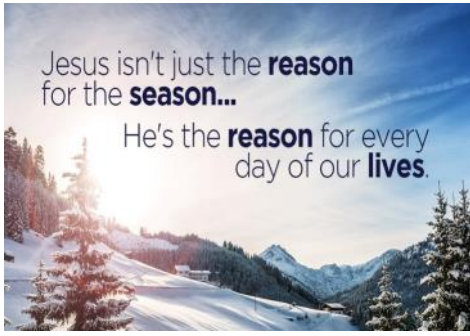
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YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

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EDITORIAL WITH CHERITH WEIS



Season's Greetings Friends!

Well 2023 is nearly "done and dusted" and Christmas is just about here!

Many of us will probably be spending Christmas with family and/or friends. Some will be on their own and spending a lonely Christmas. If that is the case and you someone who is in that situation, why not invite for Christmas lunch?

Some, as with myself will spend the day at home with my daughter and son-in-law and then a little later in the month, we will catch with other members of the family.

Whatever your situation, on behalf of APSL I wish you the compliments of the Season.

We have a number of people who submit articles to The Comet. People like road safety enthusiast, Leyland Barnett who is very busy on the local scene here in Rockhampton. Anne Ring is someone working from afar—actually NSW and who provides her monthly articles well before time and always giving us thought-provoking pieces. The RSPCA's Emma provides articles on what the RSPCA is involved in and how they are caring for our animals. I cannot leave out our State Treasurer Michael Holland who is always quick to send in pictures and article on what our oldest branch, Warwick is doing. Thank you one and all, without your support I am sure we would not have a Comet.

Only at a Branch meeting in Rocky last week, I told members about the fact that The Comet used to cost each member a \$1.00 per monthly copy. So it may have been a lot of time and hard to put it together for readers, but I am pleased I have persisted in doing that for branches.

Your February copy may have to have some help from others as in the early New Year, I am scheduled to have eye surgery in Brisbane - something which cannot be done locally.

Well, the presents are under the tree; the pressies for the Northerners have been posted and the Rum Balls taken care of!

To all of you, I wish you a Happy Christmas and a great New Year! Stay safe! Cherith.

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The annual Christmas letter: a thing of the past, or worth keeping up?

By Anne Ring



I have to admit to being in a bit of a quandary, and I'd certainly welcome advice and opinions on what to do. I'm one of *those* people who have, annually, written a one-page account of how the past year has gone for our family, and included it with my Christmas card mailout.

But, over the recent years, I've been receiving fewer and fewer cards in the post, and an increasing number of emailed seasonal wishes. Overall, moreover, there are fewer numbers of people who send either. So, I'm giving serious thought as to what I should do, and – perhaps more importantly – what do I want to do. Should I just keep on being a Christmas dinosaur and send out cards + annual update? And – in my defence – I should say here, about the latter, that I do try to keep them realistic, rather than the starry-eyed sort that get entertainingly derided as being filled with the staggeringly stellar achievements of each member of the family. And, moreover, what I end up with is a brief summary of each year which gives me a sort of record to look back on, that – in the years to come, when I'm long gone – my family might be interested in as part of our past stories, as well as possibly enjoying the single photo chosen for each, highlighting some aspect of that year. And I do see all of that as something of a rationale – or excuse – for continuing to produce them

I have consulted one of my daughters about this, and she gave an unequivocal answer: definitely go on doing what I've always done. I was a bit surprised, and very encouraged, by that. Because, I realised, that is what I wanted to hear.

And this has been a pretty eventful year for so many of my family, that I would certainly like to record it. There have been ups. And there have been challenges. To name just a few of each, they have – for example - included my partner having one of those falls that we older people dread, where he broke his ankle. And so, we've learnt a lot about how to manage that in the best way possible, with the help of a fabulous public hospital team of nurses, physiotherapists, geriatrician, surgeon (of course), and occupational therapists – talk about being lucky to live in a country with such a great health system. But what made the biggest impact, definitely, was my partner's determination to do everything in his power to ensure a speedy recovery. He's got everybody surprised by how quickly he's almost back to the pre-break level.

And after years, and years, of saying, in the annual update, that *The Book* – my book on ageing – “is nearly finished”, this is the first full year of it actually being out there, in the public domain. Looking back now, I can definitely say that the 13 years that it took to get it to publication were well worth it.

Anne Ring's article page 2.

And since then, I've been overwhelmed by the interest in it, with invitations to talk about it, and about related aspects of ageing, in so many interesting venues, with libraries at the forefront, and even being invited onto TV and radio programs. I think it's fair to say that an unexpected consequence of writing that book is that it has resulted in my becoming a vocal pro-ageing and anti-ageism advocate.

Then, there are big developments in the lives of so many members of my family, from oldest grandchild having graduated from school and living a brand new life of adventure and experiences, to youngest grandchild combatting dyslexia to master reading, and all the new directions that the sandwich generation of parents are exploring.

So, yes, writing this has convinced me: there will be a 2023 Ring Update, and Seasonal Greetings, mailout.

And to all *Comet* readers, my best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season, and best wishes for the New Year.

Dr Anne Ring is a health sociologist, freelance writer and author of "Engaging with Ageing: What matters as we grow older"

Anne Ring ©2023

Footnote:

I have been wanting to take the time to sit down to write my Christmas Letter, however, it's taken time and effort for me to sit down to attend to the December Comet. To sit down for me is a bit of an effort atm as my felt foot went out for me at Indoor Bowls last week and down I went like a the proverbial "sack of spuds" You could probably call it a 6 point landing but it had slowed me down a bit.

I too am preparing Christmas. I have purchased all my Chrissie presents excepting for one. I have made up 3 batches of Rum Balls with at least another batch too go. The first four batches are a little different as I used the Weetbix with the Mango bits plus oats flakes contained in the mixture. I have also used the plain Vita Brit recipe which is hard to beat.. AND of course a little more Rum than what the recipe says! I have posted parcels to 3 Great Grandkids in Townsville and also my sister in Gympie! My dear friend in Bowen as well. Holy Cow, financially speaking the PO is doing alright. I just hope that pressies get there in time and in one piece.

I have been waiting for articles/photos to flow in but it's only been a bit of a dribble. I did tell branches that the 20th of each month is the deadline! Also Branch reports should be into me by now.

Branches are holding their Christmas parties at the moment and I have managed to cover Mount Morgan. However, there are could have supplied content. North Rockhampton's end of year Christmas gathering is at the Frenchville on December 13, so their report will be in the February issue.





ROAD SAFETY WITH LEYLAND



Christmas and the New Year holidays are fast approaching and we will see a in traffic on our roads. What should we consider before going on any long trips?

The most important part of the motor vehicle is the point of contact with the road, the tyres.

- Check the tread is legally safe by checking the wear indicators are not level with the tread at 1.5mm.
- Check that the air pressure in the tyres is correct for your vehicle; check the owner's manual if you are not sure.
- * Check the appearance of the tyre such as cracks, lumps or any deformities that can affect the balance of the wheel. The point of contact with the road is about the size of a hand and it is so important to consider the condition of our tyres before travelling on any long trips.

Make sure the vehicle is in good condition and if there is any warning lights displayed on the dash such as a battery or oil light, make sure you get a qualified person to check it out as a mechanical failure on a trip can be very costly. If you notice any strange noises or vibrations coming from your vehicle ensure that you also get it checked no matter how minor you may feel it is, it is better to be safe than sorry.

When you are confident that the vehicle and tyres are in good working order there is one more thing that you can check with some assistance. Inspect and replace any light globes that are not working. Get someone to push the brake pedal in so that you can inspect that the brake lights are working and also check that the indicator lights are working. Distractions is another Fatal 5 issue to consider when driving, stay focused on the task at hand and ensure that you don't touch your mobile phone.

Drive to the conditions; if it is wet, slow your speed down to improve stopping ability on slippery roads and if visibility is poor turn on your headlights.

Please stay safe this festive season and return to your loved ones after an enjoyable holiday.

Road Safety with Leyland (Continued)

Check that the headlights are working properly both on low beam and high beam settings and replace the globe if necessary.

When you have done a comprehensive safety check on your vehicle, ensure that you plan for rest stops and delays to make your journey more enjoyable. Fatigue is one of the Fatal 5 causes of death on our roads, so it is important to consider having a break after travelling for 2 hours straight.



You need to be aware that some good driving decisions require good reflexes so ensure that you don't touch any alcohol or drugs that can impair your driving ability.

One of the best safety features of your vehicle is the seat belt so please wear your seat belt while driving as it will stop you from going through a windscreen in the event of a crash and also save you from serious air bag injuries.

Respect the signed speed limits including road works signs, as excessive speed reduces your reaction time as well as physical stopping ability of the vehicle.

Distractions is another Fatal 5 issue to consider when driving, stay focused on the task at hand and ensure that you don't touch your mobile phone.



Drive to the conditions; if it is wet, slow your speed down to improve stopping ability on slippery roads and if visibility is poor turn on your headlights.

Please stay safe this festive season and return to your loved ones after an enjoyable holiday.

Leyland.

Christmas in Mount Morgan

MOUNT MORGAN REPORT: On Thursday, November 23rd, Mount Morgan Branch of APSL held their Christmas function at the Leichhardt Hotel. Gusts travelled from Zilzie; Rockhampton; Gracemere and the local area.

Hosted by Pat and Barry Hare, Pat is known for her eye for detail and decoration.

The tables were decorated in finest Christmas colours and Nik Naks with presents for every guest. Among the attendees were Councilors Cherie Rutherford and Ellen Smith, as well as Sandra O'Brien from Zilzie. Gracemere resident and State President Nola Harvey was accompanied by her sister, Jean. State Secretary Cherith Weis spoke



about the dedication and work carried out in the Mount Morgan Community.

Councilor Rutherford and both also thanked the magnificent work carried by Pat and Barry Hare and the Mount Morgan branch. In her speech, Pat said she had worked in the branch for 61 years and when the branch opened they had 250 members.

Those were the days when there were no other senior organisations and the APSL Pensioner branches carried the load and had excellent support from members of the community. Well done, Mount Morgan!



FROM THE RSPCA!

Get Ready For the Love of Pets



The heart-warming animal docuseries For the Love of Pets is back with Season Two filmed at RSPCA Queensland and Queensland Veterinary Specialists. If you haven't already caught the program, it's on 7:30pm Friday night on Channel 9. You can also catch up on 9Now.



Step behind the scenes at the RSPCA as animals are rescued, rehabilitated and rehomed, and meet some friendly faces along the way doing all they can to help animals in need. From vets performing life changing surgeries, to the Adoption teams working tirelessly to care for and rehome thousands of animals each year... For the Love of Pets will fill your heart with joy and love.

With over 18,000 pets turning to RSPCA Queensland every year, For the Love of Pets is not to be missed! ***You can find out more at rspcaql.org.au.***



NORTH ROCKHAMPTON IS DOING WELL!

NTH ROCKY REPORT: Over the past few months North Rockhampton has signed on some more members of the Branch. Members enjoy playing bowls in beautiful Bauhinia House in North Rocky in the airconditioned premises. Players have increased in numbers and in the past few weeks, they have played on three mats which represents eight players to a mat (although we are just short of the eight).

Played weekly on a Wednesday the sessions are a welcome relief to the “worries of the World or whatever ails one”!

Member will hold their final day’s play for the year on Wednesday December 13 with a Christmas Lunch following at the Frenchville Sports Club. A move to restart in 2024 a week earlier than past years is gaining support. So we may restart Indoor Bowls activities on January 17, 2024. Nth Rocky wishes members throughout the State — **SEASON’S GREETINGS!**



SOME ADVICE ON HANDLING AND DISPOSING OF BATTERIES!

Rockhampton region residents are being asked to take charge of the way they dispose of batteries more safely, with B-cycle battery drop-off points now available across Council's Waste Facilities. This advice would apply to all areas in Queensland.

This new initiative will help provide the local community with convenient and safe means to dispose of used household and vehicle batteries, reducing the risks that come with incorrect disposal and stockpiling.

This holiday season, follow B-cycle's three simple steps - Don't toss them, Tape them and Take them.

Keep batteries from contacting conductive materials, water, seawater, strong oxidizers and strong acids. Do not place batteries in direct sunlight, on hot surfaces or in hot locations. Inspect batteries for signs of damage before use. Never use and promptly dispose of damaged or puffy batteries.

CARE OF LITHIUM BATTERIES.....

1. Never Charge on a Soft or Combustible Surface Due to the possibility of your batteries succumbing to fire or thermal runaway while they're on charge, it's important to create the safest possible environment while your batteries are charging. One key point to remember is that a soft surface (such as a couch) or one located near combustibles will only accelerate the speed at which the fire can take hold.

As lithium-ion battery fires produce toxic emissions, it's vital that any fire is dealt with as quickly as possible. Immediately phone your local fire service if your battery is alight and ensure your workplace is evacuated until fire services get the situation under control.

However, if your battery is charging on a non-combustible surface, such as a steel shelf, there are no combustible materials that will add to the fire. Therefore, we strongly suggest creating procedures to prohibit staff charging lithium-ion batteries in anything but a dedicated charging area on a non-combustible (preferably sheet steel) surface.

2. Handle with Care While this blog is focusing more on the safe storage of Li-ion cells, the handling of these batteries can contribute to the hazards that they create.

Batteries that are dropped, damaged or show signs of swelling should never be put back in your store or placed on charge. It's the responsibility of every staff member to make sure that any suspicious batteries are taken out of storage and charging and disposed of in the correct way.

Don't ever leave batteries lying around on work benches or out in the sun. These cells require special conditions for handling and storage if you are to reduce the likelihood of hazards. Choosing dedicated battery storage is a key consideration, however, if your staff aren't properly trained on how to operate the storage or handle the batteries, hazards can still be created.

For example, a staff member notices that a battery has been dented and damaged. However, they fail to alert their supervisor and seek advice on the situation. The staff member returns the damaged battery to the battery store. This action could potentially create an incident of thermal runaway occurring in the cell when it's put on charge. This would then overheat the surrounding batteries, causing a more severe and challenging lithium-ion battery fire. REMEMBER: Lithium-ion battery fires can create harm for , property and the environment. These fires are notoriously difficult for fire crews to contain and can quickly engulf businesses, surrounding buildings and the natural environment.

LITHIUM BATTERIES CONTINUED.....

3. Keep Battery Stores Ventilated Lithium-ion batteries should be kept in well-ventilated areas. These types of cells do not react well with excessive heat or humidity. Therefore, keeping your stores ventilated through natural or mechanical means is necessary for the safe storage of your battery cells.

Larger stores, such as battery energy storage systems, should be separated from public and protected places to reduce the risk of fire impacting surrounding buildings and communities.

4. Avoid Excessive Temperatures Your batteries must be stored in moderate conditions as they are known for their sensitivity to extreme heat and extreme cold. Choose a well-ventilated store that is away from direct sunlight, and not in the vicinity of hot surfaces, mechanical equipment, open flames or other ignition sources.

5. Leak Containment While lithium-ion batteries aren't generally prone to leaks, it's still a good idea to ensure that any leaks of electrolyte are contained. Damaged or split batteries are a serious hazard, but the electrolyte can also be released, causing a greater fire hazard. Spill containment solutions for battery stores can include banded battery cabinets or drip trays

6. Charge Batteries with the Correct Charger

Unlike the disposable lithium batteries, lithium-ion batteries are made to be recharged. However, charging can spark serious incidents such as thermal runaway and fire if there's an issue with the battery or overcharging.

The simplest way that you can reduce hazards in your lithium-ion battery stores is by always using a certified charger that is suitable for the battery product that you have onsite. Choose a charger that is suitable for your particular battery type and capacity of charge. As lithium batteries can't absorb extra charging, overcharging must be avoided. The easiest way to do this is simply unplug your charger once the battery's charged to about 80 – 100%.

7. Don't Overcharge This brings us to our next point: overcharging. Avoiding overcharging your Li-ion batteries is an easy step that you can take to reduce the likelihood of hazards occurring in your stores.

Lithium-ion batteries should be charged in a methodical manner, with staff avoiding overcharging and the deep discharging of cells. You can refer to the safety instructions from your battery manufacturer or supplier to learn more about issues with maximum current load, mechanical and thermal loads, and charging and end-point voltages.

8. Be Prepared for a Fire If you're storing any type of chemical product in your workplace, you would assume that you'd have the procedures and equipment in place to deal with a hazard, such as a fire.

However, many people don't realise how dangerous lithium-ion batteries can be – until they are made aware of the risks through seeing a report on the news or hearing about an incident through a colleague.

Making sure your organisation is prepared for a fire is just as important as taking the time to ensure all your hazard controls are in place. In the event of a battery fire, your team must know exactly how to deal with the situation so there is minimal impact on your staff, business and community.

REMEMBER: Part of your emergency planning should be to properly train and educate your staff about who is responsible for the activation of emergency equipment in the event of a fire or other hazardous incident.

9. Use a Lithium-ion Battery Cabinet Does your workplace have dedicated storage for your batteries? Or are they just kept in random cupboards around the worksite? Perhaps you don't have storage for your batteries at all? Whatever the case, you may like to consider the benefits of choosing a purpose-built lithium-ion battery storage cabinet. These cabinets are designed and constructed specifically to reduce the risks associated with this energy source. They can assist with reducing hazards such as overheating, spills and charging on unsafe surfaces. **10. Train Your Team!**

NEWS FROM WARWICK BRANCH

Eleven members of the Warwick Branch gathered for a picnic In Leslie Park on November 9. It was great to get-together outside the meeting environment.

Madeleine Cristina-Holland prepared the meal and cooked the meat and onions and salad and fruit platter.



Michael Holland, President, new Member Chris Ryan, Del Thompson and Ruby Johnson.

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WARWICK NEWS CONT.

Many thanks to Madeleine Christa-Holland for the pics from Warwick! Congratulations to Del Thompson on receiving Life membership of the Warwick Branch! Well deserved! Also pictured is Arnie Crowe. Other pics of members enjoying their Christmas lunch. January 18 will see Warwick's first meeting of 2024.



WARWICK CONTINUED.....

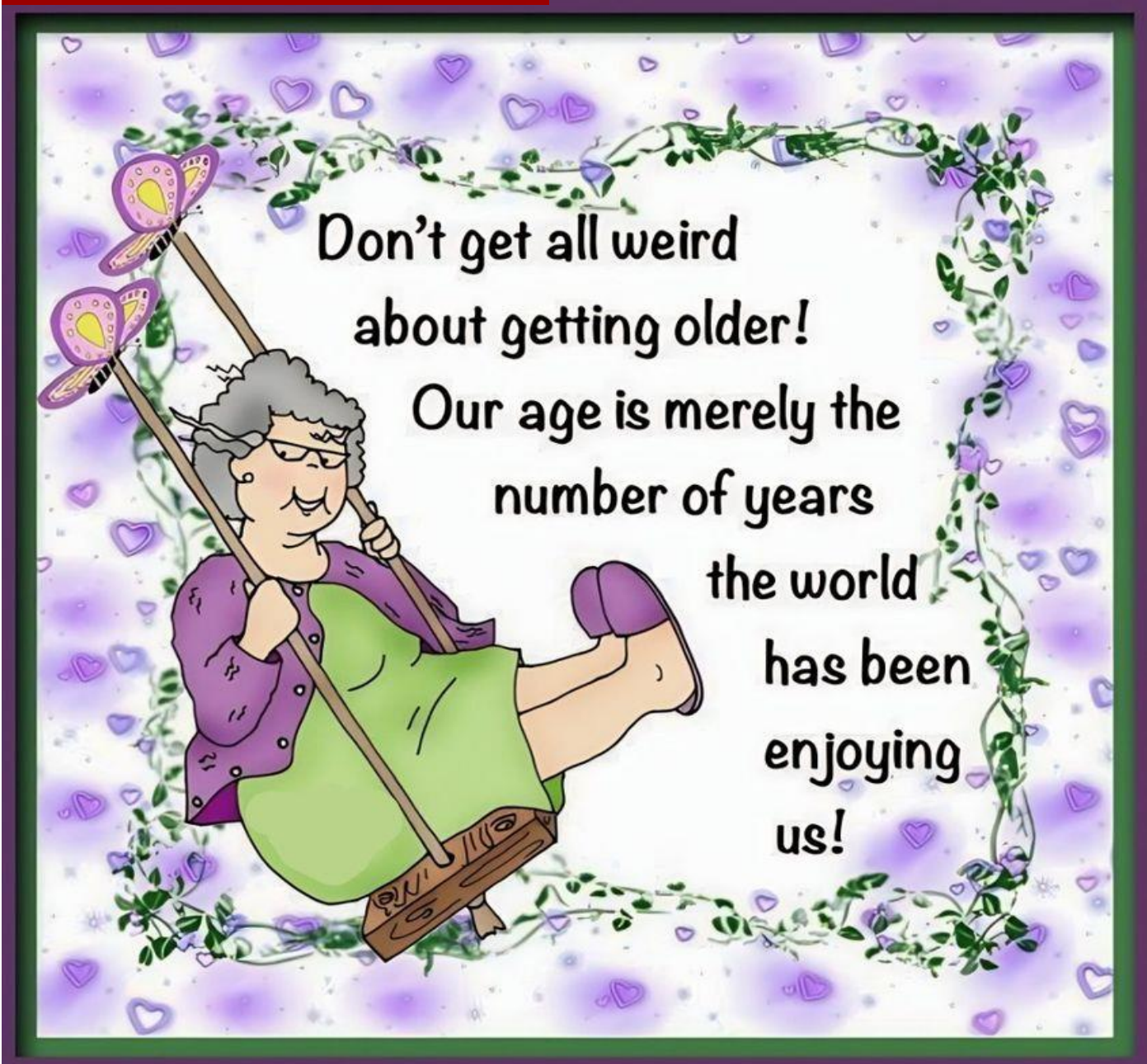
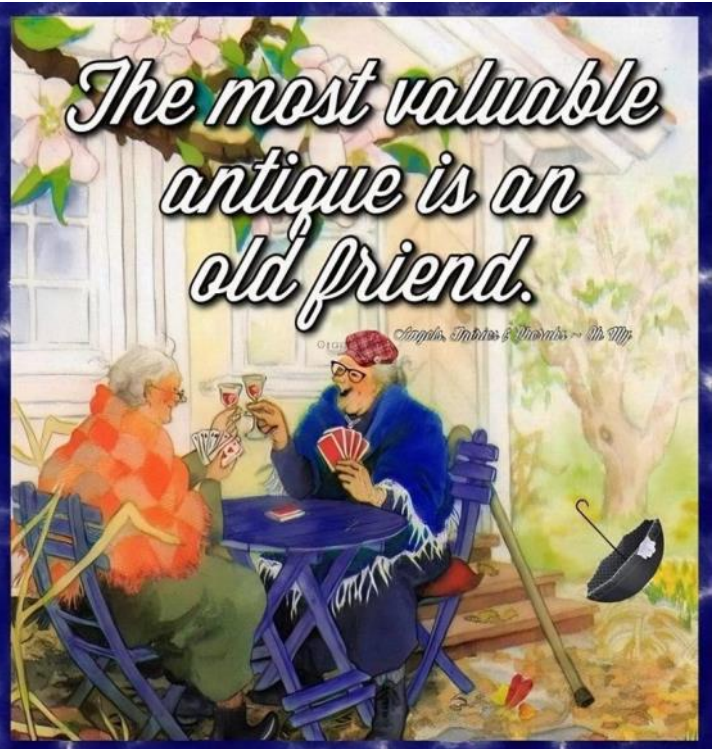
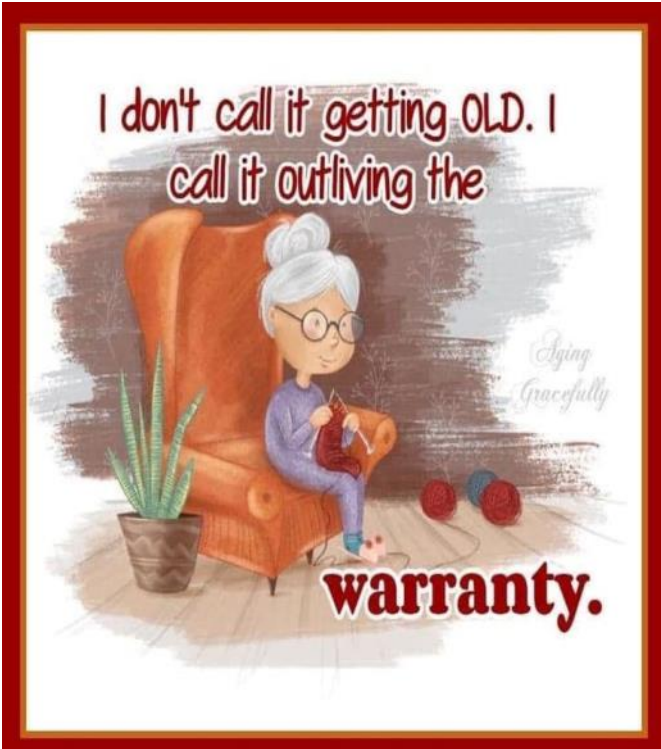


THE NINE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF PROPAGANDA

Propaganda is the backdoor hack into your mind

1. **BIG LIE** - Always choose the big lie over the small; the masses will believe it more readily.
2. **FOCUS** - Use only one or at most two selling points.
3. **REPEAT** - Use them over and over until even your enemies know them by heart.
4. **BLAME** - Never waver, acknowledge no doubt; always blame, never credit the other side. Debase, defame, dehumanize.
5. **PROVOKE** - First attract attention, then appeal to emotions.
6. **CRISIS** - Shades of gray don't work: Issues must be life/death, good/evil, freedom/slavery, love/hate.
7. **EMOTIONAL SYMBOLS** - Good slogans have *no* literal meaning, only a strong emotional appeal.
8. **PANDER** - Ignore intellectuals and reasonable arguments; target the unthinking masses with powerful emotional pitches.
9. **NO LIMITS** - Ignore all moral limits whenever you deem it useful.

PropagandaPrinciples.wordpress.com/



ESCOOTERS

EScooters should be enjoyed as a “fun thing” - a way to get around —an enjoyable experience. However, in many circumstances, that it is not the case.

In the past week, while being driven around Rocky, I have seen some of the most outrageous and blatant examples of the breaking of the laws covering the use of these machines. Unbelievable! Speeding, obviously....tearing down footpaths like a “bat out of hell” ...Oh, yes. Helmets dangling from the handle bars! DER! It’s supposed to be on your head, Stupid!

When will they ever learn? The shame is ...there’s never police around when you spot this stupidity!

I know the figures below are not up-to-date, but percentage wise if you think on the figures, they must be growing at a disgusting and worrying rate!

Our pensioners and superannuants will continue to “nag” the government on the figures and express serious concern about those who use these machines and blatantly break the law. We should be able to be pedestrians in peace! However, we find ourselves looking over our shoulders as these things are authorized to share our walking space. If your area has had experiences with wayward riders, please let us know. Conference had concerns about safety issues and usage by some riders who have no regard for their own safety or anyone elses.

Doctors have reported seeing an increase in "catastrophic" and "life-changing" injuries from e-scooter accidents, with almost 1,000 emergency department presentations in central Brisbane from November, 2018 to May, 2021. Since their introduction to Queensland in 2018, there have been **10 deaths** due to PMD accidents.



The most expensive vehicle to operate in 2023.



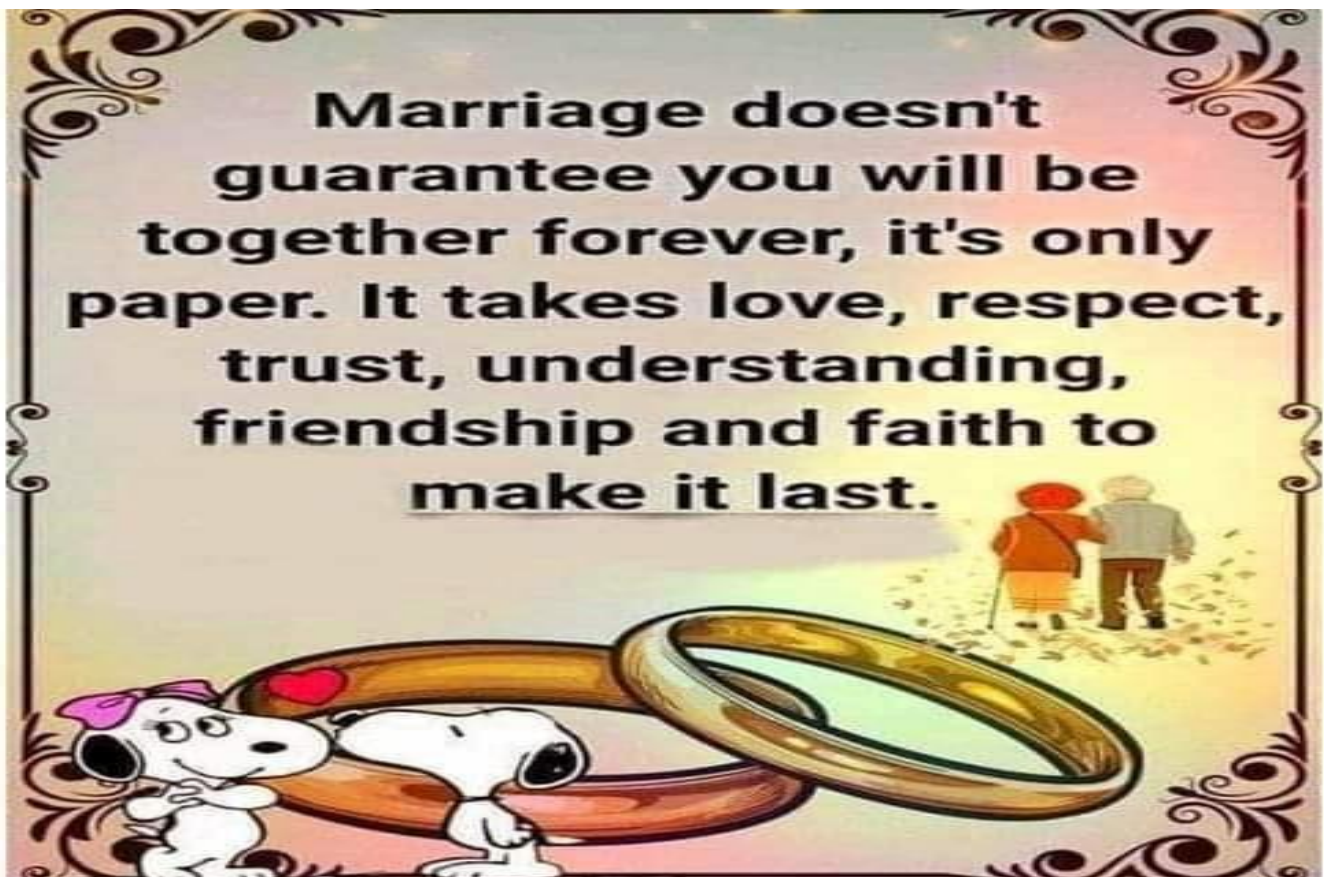
WARNING ...RANT!

For Those of you who are placing Christmas lights/decorations in your garden, can you please avoid anything that has Red or Blue flashing lights together?

Every time I come around the corner, I think it's the police and I have a panic attack.

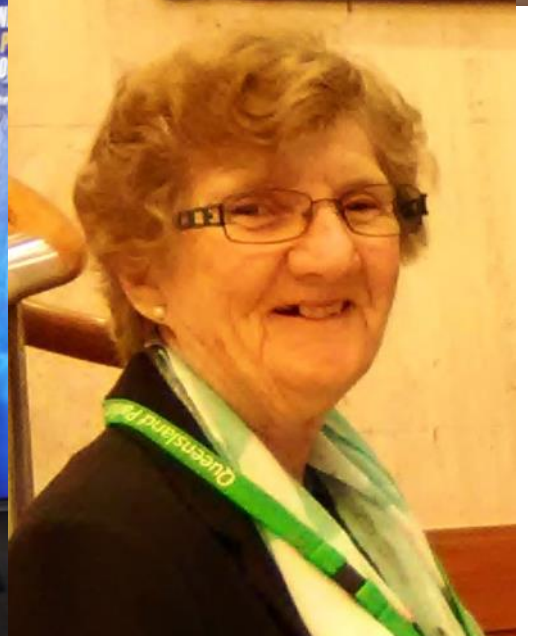
I have to brake hard, toss my wine out the window, hide the weed, fasten my seat belt, throw my phone on the floor, turn my radio down, and push the gun under the seat, all while trying to drive.

It's just too much drama, even for Christmas. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. 🌲



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

TAKEN FROM THE ARCHIVES



Featuring our President, Nola Harvey!

BRANCH REPORTS

MONTO

One from Monto reports everything is going along OK, but last week was a bit quiet. Their rent has not changed since they rented the shop.

Next year it will be 100 years since they started. Congratulations to the Branch on this milestone, hope we see some photos of their Celebrations.

People living on their own attend the Town Hall for Christmas Lunch.

Monto Branch wish every one A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.

CHILDERS

Lorraine from Childers reports all is going well, Some members went to Toowoomba for a conference. Some members got Covid, get well soon.

Members went to Woodgate for the morning. Childers are having a B.B.Q. lunch on the 29th. November for their Christmas break-up, and wish all members a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.

HERVEY BAY

Barry from Hervey Bay reports were lucky enough to receive 10ml of rain from a storm. The branch will be holding their Christmas Party in December.

They are having a good roll up of members at the moment, and are playing Table Tennis, also Chair Yoga and Tia Chi.

They are also doing Art and Rock Painting. They enjoyed a good Open Day for Senior Week.

Hervey Bay Branch Wish all A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.

CALOUNDRA

Frank from Caloundra reports they are working with the Hospital Auxiliary, also in touch with the Council and running a Christmas Raffle.

The Branch have started up a group for older people to learn how to use I-Pads, Computers and I-Phones, the first group was held at Franks House.

The Branch Christmas Party will be held on Monday morning 18th. December at Golden Beach and wish all a Merry Christmas And Happy New Year.

GYMPIE

Maureen from Gympie reports our final meeting for 2023 was held on the 9th. November, and will be in recess until February 2024. I have included

photos of members at our meeting as our Christmas Party at the Victory Hotel will be on the 14th. December. Two new members have joined our Club.

A warm Welcome to them both. Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year from all at the Gympie Branch.

CLERMONT

Shirley from Clermont reports their small group are meeting for Christmas lunch on the 1st. December, and will be having their first meeting

in February. Clermont sends Christmas Greetings and A Happy New Year to all members.

COLLINSVILLE

Denise from Collinsville reports they are still meeting every week for their meeting and fun times. Some days the attendance slips a bit with illness,

appointments and holidays. The Branch Christmas Party break-up will be on 23rd. November. and they will continue into December if members wish to come along.. The branch will resume in January. Denise

BRANCH REPORTS COINTINUED.....

GYMPIE

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PHOTOGRAPHED ARE GYMPIE MEMBERS : Photo 1. President Kevin Ward and members.

Photo 2. Anne Long and Maureen Perry.

Anne and Maureen would like to wish everyone throughout the State a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



COVID

Australia is now into its next COVID wave. We've seen hints of this for a while. Case numbers and indicators of severe disease began rising in Victoria in August. But it has taken several months for a consistent pattern to emerge across Australia.

Now we see evidence of this new wave via wastewater surveillance for traces of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID. We also see rises in COVID-related hospital admissions and antiviral prescriptions. Compared to past waves, this one has built up slowly and over a longer period.

Here's what we know about this new wave and what to expect over the coming weeks.

How do we know we're in a new COVID wave?

In earlier waves, when more people were testing for COVID and reporting their results, we were more confident case numbers were a reasonable reflection of how COVID was tracking.

However, now, a more useful indicator for COVID nationally is to look at trends in the number of prescriptions for the antiviral medications ritonavir (Paxlovid) and molnupiravir (Lagevrio) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

When will we hit the peak?

It has become more difficult to predict the size and timing of the peak. Reduced access to COVID testing and fewer requirements or opportunities to report test results, combined with slow growth rate for this wave, give a wider range of possibilities. The wave is also likely to differ between states and territories, as some got off to a later start.

Why now?

It's unlikely this latest COVID wave stems from changes in behaviour. People are generally out and about, fewer people are wearing masks in public. But we don't see any dramatic shifts in this type of behaviour in 2023 compared with 2022. It's not a seasonal cause, given respiratory viruses tend to spread better in winter, when we're cooped up indoors with others. It's unlikely it's our waning immunity from infection or vaccination that's prompting these successive waves.

Instead, we're seeing the result of a constantly mutating virus. Successful SARS-CoV-2 variants are gradually acquiring mutations. Some of these changes reduce the ability of existing antibodies to bind to and neutralise the virus. So it appears it's still the "immune escape" variants that are behind these latest waves.

Which variants are to blame?

The primary viral lineage in Australia this year has been XBB. Over the past six months, its two most influential mutations have been:

- the F456L mutation that led to the rise of EG.5.1, also known as Eris
 - more recently, the paired "FLip" mutations F456L+L455F. We see these in offspring of Eris and in much-less closely related lineages. This is a clear sign these mutations help the virus spread better.
- Both the single and paired mutations make existing antibodies less effective at blocking SARS-CoV-2 from binding to critical receptors on our cells. This increases our susceptibility to infection.

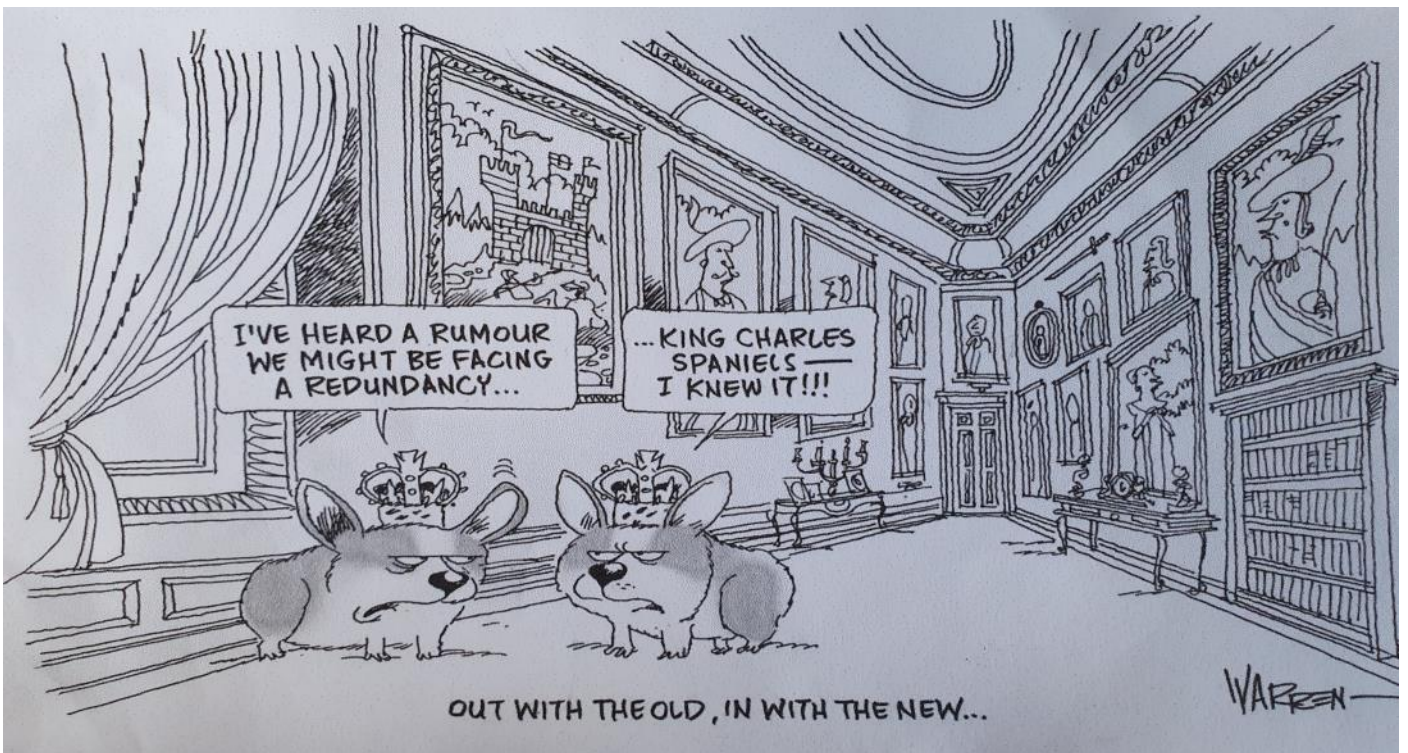
The novel BA.2.86 lineage – colloquially known as Pirola – was first reported in Denmark in August and has many unique mutations. It has not been influential so far in this wave in Australia. But it has continued to evolve. And we may see it play a much bigger role in Australia in 2024.

WORDSEARCH

Can you find all these words in the grid?

AGASSI	G D S H A R A P O V A P E R R Y C I
ASHE	N J Q N A O A A Y L B I M N Z O L G
BECKER	A O R O V Z A F A H P A Y W U N L R
BORG	H K Y S O U P C T M C E N R O E A E
BRINKER	C O L R L M O C A E G F T C T D W B
BUDGE	K V L E I S J L E I R E E T V L E D
CAPRIATI	T I O M T A L T Q E Y H I N G I S E
CAWLEY	H C N E A O R R G A J W A S O T O E
CHANG	I K N G R E E D R R E R E D E F R G
CLIJSTERS	N S O Y V M U R W H S M A I L L I W
CONNOLLY	I A C E A B U L A V E R F L J Y E L
CONNORS	T M K R N M D R D B R I N K E R A S
COURIER	A P K B Z N I D E O A D F Y K D L G
COURT	B R C L I J S T E R S A F H A T K A
DJOKOVIC	A A R N E R S C W G W C O N N O R S
EDBERG	S S E H I T A I R P A C R E K C E B
EMERSON	Q H S L E N G L E N F L D N E L R O
EVERT	F A R G W C A W L E Y C O U R I E R
FEDERER	
GRAF	
HENIN	
HEWITT	LENGLEN
HINGIS	MALLORY
KING	MCENROE
KRAMER	MURRAY
LACOSTE	NADAL
LAVER	NAVRATILOVA
LENDL	PERRY
	RAFTER
	ROSEWALL
	SABATINI
	SAMPRAS
	SELES
	SHARAPOVA
	TILDEN
	WADE
	WILLIAMS

These puzzles are in the Courier Mail. I subscribe on Line which is a lot cheaper than buying it daily. Most people have a computer/printer. Print of the puzzle and wallah..your time is used well and your memory given an overhaul.



FROM THE ARCHIVES..... VISIT TO QMIR BERGHOFER FACILITY, PLUS



Around 2017, three members of the Management Committee joined a group inspection of the QMIR Berghofer facility. Nola Harvey; Joy Ferguson and Cherith Weis were impressed with the work being carried out at the facility.

The QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute is an Australian medical research institute located in Herston, Brisbane, in the state of Queensland. QIMR was established in 1945 by the Government of Queensland through the enactment of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research Act



Nola Harvey joined with members of the Queensland Nurses

Nola and Ian Hensche from the National Seniors



Message to Branches

This space box is provided to insert your Branch contact details when you leave The Comet at Doctors' Surgeries /Libraries and so on



CODE of ETHICS and PERSONAL CONDUCT

The Australian Pensioners' & Superannuants' League (Qld) Inc.

Be patient and courteous in all dealings with fellow members.

Be inclusive - Members to welcome and support people of all backgrounds and identities and discriminate against no one.

Be considerate - Each member should respect fellow pensioners and superannuants. Our decisions and comments will affect our fellow members, therefore we must always take this into consideration.

Be respectful - Each member may not agree all the time, but disagreement is no excuse for disrespectful behaviour. Each member may experience frustration from time to time, but we cannot allow this to become a personal attack. An environment where people feel uncomfortable or threatened is not productive or creative and not in the best interest of The League.

Choose your words carefully - Always conduct yourself professionally. Harassment and exclusionary behaviour is not acceptable in The League. Differences of opinion and disagreement will occur, each member must resolve and disagreements and differing views constructively and respectfully.

Our differences can be our strengths - Members can find strength in diversity. Different people have varying perspectives on issues, and that can be valuable for solving problems or generating new ideas for the betterment of The League.

APSL Mission Statement

To lobby powerfully with governments at all levels and private sector agencies, and within community sector, to promote all aspects of the security, well being and dignity of pensioners of all ages, superannuants, other self-funded retirees, low income families and other disadvantaged people, including Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and Culturally & Linguistically Diverse (CALD) peoples.