

The Toodyay Herald

Your locally owned
community newspaper
Est. 1902

5000 copies circulating in Toodyay, West Toodyay, Goomalling,
Bolgart, Calingiri, Morangup, Coondle, Waddington, Culham,
Bejoording, Nunile, Julimar, Bakers Hill, Clackline, Wooroloo,
Wundowie, Gidgegannup and local districts.

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Huge loan to fund new sport complex

Shire says it may sell historic
Toodyay Showground to pay
for planned \$18 million debt

Michael Sinclair-Jones

RATEPAYERS face a quadrupling of shire debt after the Toodyay Shire Council voted 6-2 last month to borrow \$8 million to build a new \$23 million sport and recreation complex near the town's school.

The shire says it may sell the town's historic showgrounds to help pay for the large-scale project, which would require the annual Toodyay Agricultural Show to move to a new football oval to be built at the site.

The plan – which includes a long-awaited public swimming pool worth \$4.7 million – relies on getting a \$9.2 million federal grant, for which application bids close this month.

If successful, the federal grant will pay for 40 per cent of the cost of building new playing areas for football, cricket, hockey, soccer, rugby, tennis, netball and basketball, a new function centre for 200 people with an office, gym, creche and commercial kitchen, and a 25-metre unheated swimming pool that will open only in summer.

The \$8 million loan plus interest will cost ratepayers a total of \$18 million over the next 20 years, or an extra \$900,000 a year plus annual running costs.

The shire's budget surplus for the current financial year is just \$167,000.

With shire rates budgeted to raise \$5.4 million this year, the additional cost of the \$23 million project represents a 17 per cent rates increase for the next 20 years.

However, shire costings show it would need to borrow only \$60,000 to build just a pool for \$4.7 million.

The shire says the new sport and recreation site will "cater for sporting activities and community events such as the annual Toodyay Show".

Unsewered

MOVING the Toodyay Show would enable the shire to subdivide and sell the town's historic 164-year-old showgrounds – including the old grandstand, exhibition hall, sheep and wool pavilions, poultry shed, function hall and commercial kitchen – to help pay for the new sports complex.

However, the showground site is unsewered – as are all town properties on that side of the Avon River – and any redevelopment for private sale would most likely require connection to the town's main sewer on the other side of Newcastle Bridge, which would add significant site costs.

The showground area includes a former hockey pitch which was abandoned because it covers an Aboriginal burial site.

However, there appears room to move the pitch to an adjacent area used each year for Side Show Alley and trade displays.

"The Toodyay showground is freehold land owned by the shire so there is potential to develop some of that to raise funds," Shire CEO Stan Scott told last month's council meeting.

The \$23 million sport and recreation funding plan was approved 6-2, with Crs Ben Bell and Sally Craddock opposed.

Continued Page 10, Editorial and Letters Page 4, Bat in the Belfry Page 5.



Move over Moondyne – Toodyay's new-look Christmas street party a winner

HUNDREDS of people flocked to Stirling Terrace on December 1 for a new-look annual Christmas street party that could be set to rival the town's popular Moondyne

Festival as a major Avon Valley attraction.

The Toodyay Chamber of Commerce and Industry event was organised by local resident Tanya Stuart who led a team of

about 40 volunteers and included 30 stalls, carols by the Toodyay Community Singers, children's rides, local food outlets staying open late and a visit by Santa on a fire truck.

Twenty times more heavy trucks planned for Toodyay Road

THOUSANDS more heavy trucks a year may be added to Toodyay Road – one of the WA's worst for serious and fatal traffic accidents – due to planned new quarrying operations in Mundaring and Toodyay.

This is in addition to plans by Perth landfill company Opal Vale to add thousands more heavy trucks a year to Toodyay Road for a massive new tip for metropolitan garbage in Hoddly Well, which has been appealed by local residents.

Also on hold are plans for a 62sq/km bauxite mine stretching across Toodyay Road from Wundowie to the Avon River and less than a kilometre from the Morangup subdivision, which is home to more than 800 Shire of Toodyay residents.

The four projects threaten to turn large parts of the Perth Hills between Gidgegannup and Toodyay into a major new open-cut mining, quarrying and rubbish dumping province serviced by a heavy truck route through an

area occupied by hundreds of residents on farms and rural 'lifestyle' blocks.

Mundaring shire is considering whether to allow a 20-fold increase in the size of two adjoining Bailup quarries which would add up to 33,000 more heavy trucks a year entering and leaving Toodyay Road near Dryandra Road.

The Mundaring shire has received 20 objections, including from the Morangup Progress Association on behalf of nearby Shire of Toodyay residents, and from the Regal Hill Water Supply Inc, which represents and supplies water to 65 land owners in the nearby Regal Hill Estate.

The gravel pit operator plans to increase production from 47,000 tonnes to nearly a million tonnes a year.

Average crushing will increase from 200 tonnes daily to up to 4000 tonnes a day.

The size of thousands of extra trucks loads on Toodyay Road will also increase from

20-40 tonnes to 50 tonnes per vehicle, five days a week.

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The Toodyay Herald

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Deadlines for the next edition are listed below with the paper on the streets in the first week of each month except in January when there is no edition.

All advertising should be emailed to advertising@toodyayherald.com.au. Editorial contributions and photographs should be emailed to news@toodyayherald.com.au.

Photographs for publication should be at least 500kb in file size to ensure quality reproduction in the newspaper.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are \$33 (postage and packaging) per year (11 issues). Please send a cheque to PO Box 100, Toodyay 6566.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of The Toodyay Herald is available at \$10 per financial year, with members entitled to free advertising worth \$15 annually. Please send your name, phone number and residential, postal and email address with your membership fee to PO Box 100, Toodyay 6566 or leave it at 92B Stirling Terrace.

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DISTRIBUTION

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THANK YOU

Many thanks to the volunteers who helped produce this edition of The Toodyay Herald; Joseph Fernandez (Legal), Richard Grant, Allan Gregory, Beth and Peter Ruthven and Jean Witcombe.

ADVERTISING

RATES - NO GST IS APPLICABLE

The cost of a casual display advertisement is \$4.15 per column cm (NB Column width is 61.5mm.)

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ADVERTISING DEADLINE	STORY DEADLINE	DISTRIBUTED
Noon Thursday January 25	Noon Tuesday January 30	Wednesday February 7

Please note our email addresses

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 Articles and stories: news@toodyayherald.com.au

Ol' Blind Joe

Stopping for a chat

Stirling Hamilton

THE LAST time I'd been in Virginia City, Nevada, USA, was back in '68 when I bought my first rock collection.

The other day I heard that the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse were in town so I rode in and saw a white, black, red and pale horse tied up outside the saloon.

I hitched up my old brown mare, went to the bar, grabbed me a bottle of bourbon and joined them boys at the table.

I'd known Death for years and asked him how they were hanging, and he laughed and said they're still swinging.

We racked up a game of pool and he told me he was pissed off with his three companions.

Seems Pestilence had made a deal with chemical and farm giants Bayer and Monsanto to merge, creating the world's largest integrated pesticides and seeds company.

These guys are no friends of humanity and they're gonna be in charge of much of the the world's food supply.

Bayer became part of World War 2 German chemical conglomerate I. G. Farben which invented Zyklon B, the gas used by Nazis to murder Holocaust victims.

Agent Orange

MONSANTO manufactured the notorious military herbicide Agent Orange which America used extensively in the Vietnam War - it damaged the health of millions of people, including US service personnel, and caused birth defects in later generations.

They also market Glyphosate (Roundup) which is one of the world's most widely used herbicides with more than six billion tonnes sprayed on farms, gardens and public spaces in the last decade.

From beer to wine to breakfast food, the pesticide is showing up in a lot of places that consumers don't expect to find it.

The abundance of insects has plummeted by 75 per cent, recent studies show tropical rainforests emitting more carbon dioxide gas than fossil fuel vehicles and snow from the world's highest mountain, Mt Everest, has become too toxic to pass US Environmental Protection Agency drinking water standards.

War has jumped into bed with America, Israel and Saudi Arabia, and they plan to lay waste to whatever remains of the Middle East in Iran, then take out Russia and China.

It's an expensive business dropping hellfire missiles on innocent people's heads - they cost a million dollars a pop by the time they're delivered to some other poor sucker's country so that you can justify making more weaponry.

Famine makes a killing just on the leftovers of War and Pestilence but he always wants more and lobbies for sanctions to be imposed on poor countries.

He got half a million children dead in the decade of sanctions against Iraq and now he's wiping them out in Yemen.

Kids here are too fat and lazy to walk to school, and in Yemen they're shrivelled up and dying in the dirt.

"I've been here since the beginning of life and I'll be the guy turning off the lights when

the party's over," Death said.

"Those other three are just petulant teenagers who wouldn't know their arse from their elbow.

"They're punks who have only been around for a little bit and think it's some kind of competition in killing people.

"They don't understand that by killing everyone they will cease to exist because they're merely constructs of mankind's imagination.

"It's not like I'm short of clients.

"The US opioids crisis claimed more white Americans' lives last year than the whole of the Vietnam War.

"Got me a good crew doing the day-to-day stuff while I mostly take the great thinkers, artists and shamans across the river myself and often stop rowing halfway so as to have a good chat.

"When you've been kicking around for 3.8 billion years, finding an hour to spare with Nikola Tesla or Picasso ain't so hard.

"When I took Jimi Hendrix over I ended up giving him my harmonica and he was ashappy as a puppy at a barbecue.

"I've always had an affinity for human beings, and even though they're often dumb as dogshit I still find them fascinating.

"You always say, 'with our thoughts we create the world', well, it's also the way folks experience death and it's amazing how candid people can be when the final curtain is falling.

"When they're crossing the river, Islamic people imagine the tiled mosaics of a mosque, a Christian will envisage stained glass windows with a vaulted ceiling while a Buddhist experiences a temple with bells ringing.

"Every tribe on earth has different cultural nuances which shape their expectations and fears about me.

"Since life blossomed on this planet I've seen thousands of gods come and go, and I know the transition intimately - it's the price one pays for having lived.

Love remains

"I LIKED that dude Albert Schweitzer who said: 'The only thing of importance when we depart will be the traces of Love we have left behind'."

I asked Death how he handled all the pressures and demands of his role.

He answered: "Sure, I am an immortal sociopath but you couldn't do this job if you weren't."

"I was revered as a female deity back in the good old Neolithic days, and even Ancient Greece thought me not evil but inevitable, and portrayed me as a winged, bearded man," he said.

"Christians in the Middle Ages conceived of me as a skeleton with a scythe wearing a black robe.

"Have you ever tried riding a horse when you're a skeleton holding a scythe?"

"Trust me, it's not pleasant.

"I've always resented them for that, and they got their comeuppance on the crossing."

From my rotting body, flowers shall grow and I am in them and that is eternity' - Norwegian painter Edvard Munch (1863-1944).

Have your say on local public transport

THE SHIRE of Toodyay has been working with the Public Transport Authority to provide input into the future of public transport services in Toodyay.

The shire thinks it knows some of the answers, but would like input from the community.

"The best way to find out what people

think is to ask them," said Shire CEO Stan Scott.

The survey, available from the Visitors Centre, Shire Administration, Toodyay Library and the shire website toodyay.wa.gov.au, can be returned to any of these centres prior to the closing date of Friday December 15.

Office Hours are from 9am-1pm on highlighted days						
CLOSED THROUGHOUT DECEMBER						
January - February 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
January	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	Feb 1	2	3

Riding humps, bumps of niche market

Ieva Tomsons

RONJA and Max Bergman are not chasing the camel milk market where the so-called 'white gold' sells for up to \$32 a litre.

Their DromeDairy camel farm in Morangup is currently an open-air dairy where they milk camels once a day to produce a range of skin-care products for a niche market.

The highly educated migrants from Hanover in Germany – Ronja (28) is a forensic scientist and Max (32) has a PhD in Agricultural Science – are pragmatic in their approach to sustainable agriculture where the camels will be the animal component in an integrated farming system.

"No extreme is good," said Max, who doesn't exclude targeted spraying on a farm which will include fodder trees and crops to sustain the camels which will eventually be milked twice a day.

For a man who cautions against excess and extremes, Max has 'pushed the envelope' in the past and continues to work 16 to 18 hours a day setting up the farm and developing marketing strategies with Ronja after their kids Maya (20 months) and Tim (2 months) have gone to bed.

Diagnosed at eight with the degenerative eye disease retinitis pigmentosa, Max is legally blind and only has peripheral vision.

It hasn't stopped him from a serious tilt at an Olympic medal running middle distance events in the 2004 Paralympic Games in Athens and in Beijing four years later.

At that stage Max was representing Germany but when the couple migrated to Australia in 2009 Max wanted to run for his new country.

"I scaled up my training to try to qualify for Rio in 2016 but my brother (his main training partner) got sick and moved away, and it didn't happen."

These days with a very young family and the dairy in the early stages of development, both the Bergmans are running an ultra-marathon with Ronja working as a forensic chemist three days a week to keep the project running.

Although the Morangup dairy was only set up in April this year, Ronja and Max have been sourcing wild camels since 2016 when they were in partnership on a Baldvis camel farm.

The Bergmans have now purchased their own truck and head out to the station country to select unbroken camels.



Ronja and Max Bergman with daughter Maya and Max's guide dog Forest take a quick break from their hectic schedules.

"Obviously I don't drive," laughs Max. "It's important they are not mishandled from the start," said Max who uses trust-based camel training. "I can get a halter on the first day and have them tamed in three to four days."

At the moment, four females with calves at foot are being milked in the rudimentary set up which works well with holding and let-out pens and a high race where the camel snacks on protein mix while it is being milked.

The calf starts the process of the rapid milk let down which lasts for only three minutes.

Max deftly cleans the four teats and dashes to open the gate to the calves' pen for the mother's calf to enter and begin suckling.

The suckling swells the teats and stimulates the release of the oxytocin hormone which is essential to milk let-down.

Max is onto it and back in position to place

the milking cups in time to collect about 2 litres of milk.

There is still plenty of milk left for the calf which continues to suckle on its mum straight after feeding.

The only difficulty Max seems to have during the milking process is seeing when the flow has stopped which he manages by tilting the apparatus sideways into his peripheral line of sight.

"It's all about how you position yourself in relation to the animal – and trust," he said.

Each week, the Bergmans collect on average 50 litres of milk. Some is sold as unprocessed bath milk, but the majority is frozen and sent to Canning Vale where it is made into soap and moisturiser.

Some is also stored at Murdoch University where an honours student is researching camel behaviour, and another is analysing

the milk's unique properties.

As scientists, the Bergmans are not making any blanket claims about the healing properties of camel milk but believe their silky moisturiser works well on sunburn and can be used in conjunction with traditional medicine to heal skin conditions such as eczema.

Boutique industries have come and gone in the Avon Valley, but this hard-working couple are in it for the long haul and plans are in place for an enclosed dairy for a herd of up to 40 camels which will be milked twice a day.

NOTICE

Due to increased circulation and associated print costs, as from our next edition (in February) *The Toodyay Herald* will no longer be delivered to Toodyay Post Office boxes.

It will still be delivered to Toodyay home letterboxes by James our postman, and to all Morangup residences.

The *Herald* will now be available a day earlier at Toodyay news stands from the first Wednesday of each month except in January, when there is no paper.

Shire approves \$2.5 million Vic Hotel upgrade



Architect's drawing of rear of Victoria Hotel redevelopment with 16 new accommodation units.

TOODYAY's historic Victoria Hotel is due to reopen later next year after a major renovation and rear redevelopment was approved last month by the Toodyay Shire Council.

Owners Dean and Amanda Carter, who also own the town's IGA supermarket, expect work to be completed between the middle and end of 2018.

The plan includes 16 new accommodation units, new toilets, and a kitchen, laundry and large 'al fresco' area with a glazed enclosure that will open to terraced outdoor seating.

New accommodation will include a two-story block of four units on the eastern side and a drive-through bottle shop that once was a billiards saloon before it was converted to a pool and music venue with a stage.

Old stables with a sagging roof will be demolished and Mr Carter has offered to re-use the original bricks elsewhere on hotel site.

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The Toodyay Herald

A parallel universe

IT'S AS if our shire council exists in a parallel universe where numbers don't count and anything goes if it can be flogged off for a fast buck.

Take the latest plan to borrow \$8 million to build a huge new sport and recreation complex for \$23 million near the school when most people just want a pool for far less cost.

Eight million dollars becomes \$18 million with interest which will require repayments of \$900,000 every year for the next 20 years.

This year's budget surplus is just \$167,000 after our council lost hundreds of thousands of dollars on legal fees.

But we're not allowed to know about that, so let's pretend it didn't happen.

How then to repay such a huge debt?

Bingo – let's sell the showground.

You'd think nobody in their right mind would suggest such a thing but that's exactly what our shire is quietly thinking.

Our 164-year-old showgrounds are WA's second-oldest and nestle near the river in one of the most scenic locations you could hope to find anywhere in the state.

The old wooden grandstand is a treasure, and the exhibition hall, pavilions and display sheds evoke a historic past that embodies the charm of Toodyay's unique heritage.

The shire's own website says Toodyay "lays claim to some of the most magnificent examples of natural and cultural heritage in Western Australia".

Sure the footy changerooms – described by the shire as "renowned as the worst in the league" – need fixing up, and – heaven forbid – "the hockey ladies have to share their changerooms with the football umpires", but you'd think that could be sorted for a lot less than \$18 million.

Then there's the hockey pitch behind the grandstand which turned out to be an Aboriginal burial ground that lay forgotten for 34 years until local Ballardong people rightly complained that their ancestors' remains were being disrespected.

Why not move the pitch a short distance to where Sideshow Alley and trade and community tents are set up once a year?

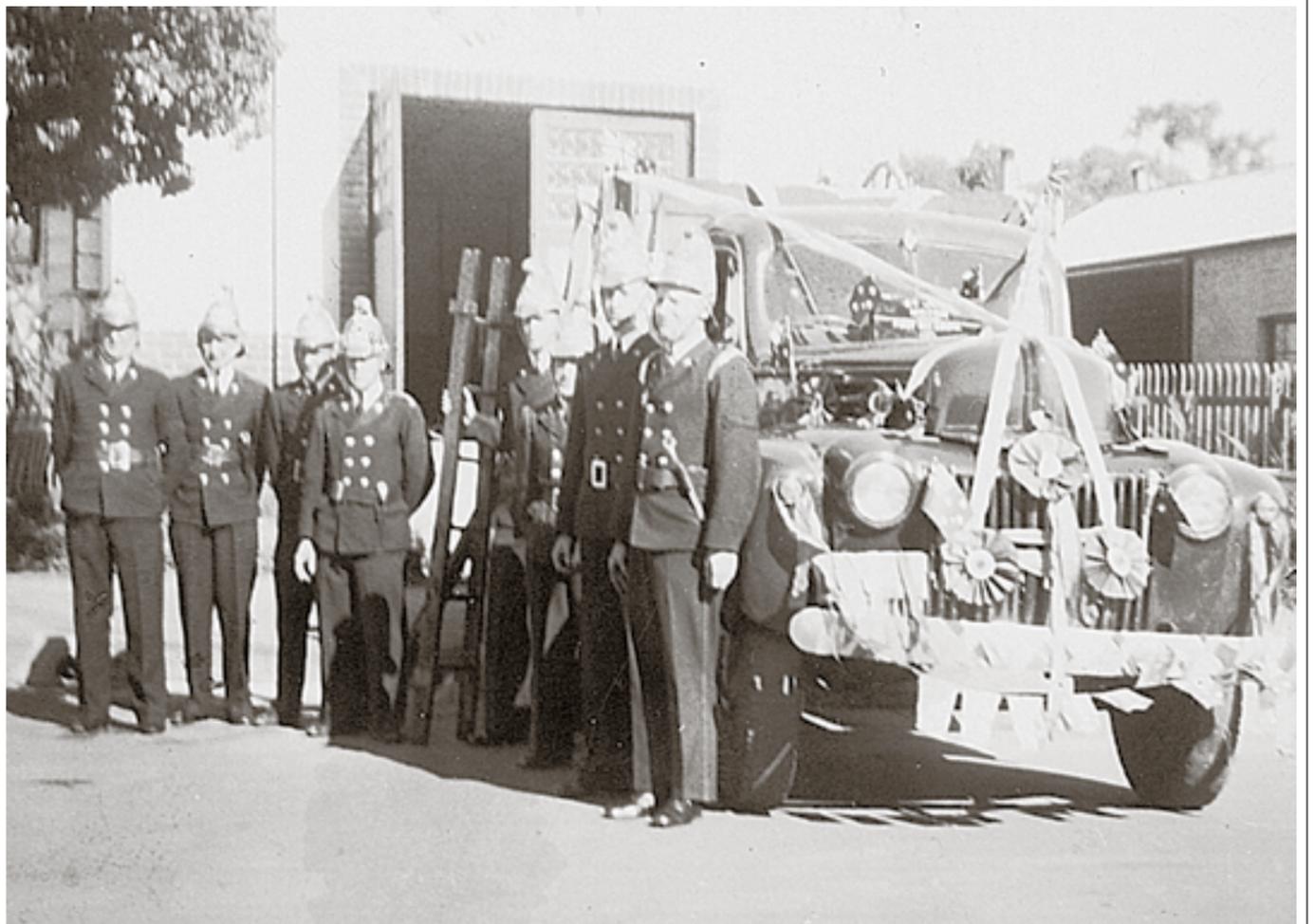
And of course, there's the bowling green and tennis courts, both of which need resurfacing, and which the shire wants to move to the new sports and recreation complex so it can sell more council-owned land currently leased by those clubs.

It's amazing really what \$570,000 wasted on legal fees could have achieved.

But let's flog the showground instead, jack up rates – yet again – and maybe if we're lucky, we'll get a pool too.

Happy Christmas everyone.

Michael Sinclair-Jones
Editor



The way we were – Toodyay fire brigade members in full dress uniform prepare to take part in a street parade in Stirling Terrace to celebrate World War 2 Victory Day on 10 June 1946. The procession went from the former Newcastle Hotel (later a tavern) to the Toodyay Showgrounds. Photo donated by Norma Walsh (nee Scott) from Kalamunda. From Newcastle Gaol Collection.

LETTERS

Grandiose plan too costly

ON TUESDAY November 28, I attended the Ordinary Council Meeting and wish to advise the ratepayers of a decision by the majority of councillors on the progress of the town pool.

The councillors voted 6-2 to allow the CEO to proceed with the application for federal and state grants and if these are successful, to apply for a loan of \$8 million (I repeat – this is eight million dollars).

The shire wants to build the pool and sporting complex for an amount of \$23 million, this is to be funded from monies in hand, grants and the \$8 million loan.

To service this loan the repayment will be \$500,000 per annum, plus a cost of \$20,000 per month for the pool running cost, over a 20-year period.

The shire is struggling to operate within its current budget with little or no surplus, so how can it believe that a further cost of this amount can be serviced?

I know how they can do it, increase our rates by at least 8-10 per cent, plus the normal increases, so I can see an increase of 15 per cent in the coming years.

Only two councillors could see that this is a problem and voted against the motion.

They explained that they were not against the pool, just the overall cost of a big new recreation centre.

Most of the discussion was about the pool and not the overall complex. I believe that the majority of councillors did not fully understand what they were voting for and subsequent ramifications.

My question is: why can't we have a pool for \$4.7 million which could be funded without a loan, in lieu of this grandiose scheme?

If you the ratepayers wish to be handed this cost for 20 years then do nothing – don't attend council meetings, don't write letters to the Herald, don't contact the Toodyay Progress Association to complain about the high rate increases.

If you do not want this impost, then talk to your councillors and let your feelings be known.

They would be able to put a motion forward to have only the pool with a manageable debt, but this can only happen if the majority of councillors are in agreement.

Brian Foley
Dewars Pool

Voter turn-out 'heartening'

AS AN outsider with a soft spot for Toodyay, I celebrate the high response rate in the recent council election.

Here in the City of Gosnells, we had one of the lowest participation rates, as many residents found it to be 'ho-hum' as 31 candidates vied for seven vacancies.

With due respect to those who prefer not to vote, I see it as heartening for the Toodyay community to so embrace the election.

And I thought Helen Shanks' "New dynamic" letter in last month's Herald rounded out the matter quite evenly.

Alf Campbell,
Kenwick

Belt up, save money

POLICE Sgt Roy George gave a timely reminder in the November Toodyay Herald of the financial consequences of motorists and passengers not wearing seat belts.

It is a sound idea to always fit seat belts before starting a vehicle's engine and to stop the engine before removing a seat belt.

This ensures that you will not break the law and it also saves a small amount of fuel which could add up over a year.

A win, win situation.

Barry Keens
Toodyay

Untidy town

TOODYAY won the Australian Tidy Towns Award in 2015 and the place has regressed since then.

What has happened to Adopt-a-Spot?

Tidy the Town, Toodyay.

Patricia de Soto-Phillips
Toodyay

The Toodyay Herald invites you to have your say in our letters page. Please email us at news@toodyayherald.com.au with your full name, address and phone number. Letters that are short, sharp and to the point about topical local issues are preferred. The Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length, grammar and punctuation.

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Back to square one as shire's new cat law found to be toothless

Michael Sinclair-Jones

TOODYAY'S new cat control local law needs to be rewritten from scratch and advertised for public comment a second time, the Toodyay Shire Council has been told.

WA's Local Government Department wrote to the council last month saying that the shire's proposed new cat control laws – adopted by Toodyay councillors last August – contained significant drafting deficiencies and lacked fauna protection zones.

"This essentially means we cannot use this local law as intended," Shire Planning and Development Manager Graeme Bissett said in a report to a council forum earlier this month as *The Toodyay Herald* went to press.

"The implications are so significant that we cannot proceed with the current process."

A Local Government Department review found that the shire's new law had failed to

define what a cat was and was "too restrictive on where cats can be", Mr Bissett said.

As a result the shire could not use its new law to control cats in public places, which was the opposite of what had been intended.

Toodyay councillors decided last June to draft a new cat control local law, advertised it for public comment in July and approved the new local law in August.

"It is clear ... that a significant redraft of the local law is now required to bring it in line with their (the Local Government Department's) submission," Mr Bissett said.

"This means the process now has to restart. The current local law process cannot proceed.

"We are now back at where we started." Mr Bissett said the cat law would be redrafted and brought back to the council.

It would also need to be re-advertised for public comment in the New Year.



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Still no answers, huge new debt, gravel rash and fresh air



Geoff Appleby

THOSE who thought the ousting of Toodyay's former shire president in recent local government elections would send a wake-up call to most other councillors can think again.

Despite a valiant effort by new East Ward Cr Ben Bell to show the way, it was business as usual last month in the Old Court House council chambers.

Public question time was the usual stonewalling farce.

New Shire President Brian Rayner was on leave, so Deputy President Therese Chitty sat in the hot seat.

She faced a grilling from Toodyay Progress Association Chair Larry Graham about the huge amount of ratepayers' money – more than half a million dollars (10 per cent of annual shire rates) – squandered on suing former shire CEO Graham Merrick and former shire president Charlie Wroth.

Cr Chitty was Shire Deputy President for much of that time, a councillor for the rest of it and stuck to her former president's official line of keeping ratepayers in the dark.

She also declined to comment on whether the shire – as revealed in the WA Supreme Court last year – breached local government law by failing to follow correct procedure before launching its disastrous court case.

Mr Graham then asked why the shire had failed to comply with WA Freedom of Information law and who had authorised a written request for the public release of details about lawyers' costs to be delayed until after the October shire elections in case it influenced how local people voted.

Cr Chitty said – after consulting CEO Stan Scott – that the questions would be taken "on notice" and answered at the next council meeting on Tuesday December 19.

Mr Scott said a shire document listing council payments to lawyers was submitted to the Freedom of Information Commissioner but it was neither "complete or accurate".

This startling revelation begs the question: does anyone at the shire actually know how much ratepayers' money was spent on this legal debacle, and when will those

responsible for it be held to account?

New Crs Bell and Di Granger (Central Ward) have a hell of a job in front of them to restore confidence, reason and sanity in a council that appears to remain hamstrung by a failed legacy of secrecy and obfuscation.

Lone Ranger: Cr Bell was the Lone Ranger in arguing against a plan to allow a big new quarry on a former extraction site in Lover's Lane, Toodyay.

The 53ha site is overlooked by a nearby hilltop rural residential subdivision with panoramic views west and south.

The nearby quarry will operate six days a week (including Saturdays) from 6am to 5pm and include blasting operations and a crushing plant while processing up to 140,000 tonnes of sand, gravel and stone each year.

The operation will also add 800 heavy trucks a year to Toodyay Road – one of the State's worst for serious traffic accidents.

Planning and Development Manager Graeme Bissett reported to the meeting that quarrying Toodyay Stone would "provide recognition for Toodyay and the Shire of Toodyay".

Benefit disputed

However, Cr Bell backed local residents' objections and said he could see "no benefit in it at all for Toodyay".

"There's no jobs and it interferes with tourism," he said.

"All I can see is a downside for people who live nearby."

Mr Scott agreed with Cr Bell that "there was very little benefit for Toodyay" but said if councillors rejected it, applicant SSSA (WA) Pty Ltd could appeal to the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT), which would cost the shire more in legal fees to defend.

"So your suggestion is to grant things rather than go to SAT?" Cr Bell asked.

"It's a large-scale sand and gravel operation within 500 metres of houses – I struggle to understand how this brings no benefit to the community and yet we are going to allow it."

Mr Scott said the SAT was "generally applicant friendly" and that shire refusal could be overturned on review.

The quarry was approved 6-2, with Crs Bell and Paula Greenway (West Ward) against, and Cr Rayner absent.

Taj Mahal: Following years of empty talk and failure to listen to ratepayers, councillors have finally woken up to the fact the town's lack of a public swimming pool is a serious

community issue that demands urgent action.

However, instead of building a modest \$4.7 million pool that the shire could easily afford, most councillors continue to be fixated with a \$23 million 'Taj Mahal' multi-sports and recreation complex that will plunge us \$8 million further into debt and cost ratepayers more than \$500,000 a year to repay over the next 20 years.

Given the shire's current near-deficit budget, the new borrowing represents at least a 10 per cent rates hike until 2037, by which time most of the shire's ageing population will be pushing up daisies, or close to it.

This is despite a report tabled at last month's council meeting that the project's scope, specifications and cost-control issues "could result in a major financial risk".

When asked by Cr Bell if ratepayers knew that their shire was about to commit them to an \$8 million loan, Mr Scott replied "yes, it has been advertised", but failed to say how or when – and, of course, nobody asked.

It certainly wasn't mentioned in the shire's latest six-page newsletter, which includes a whole page on the apparently more pressing issue of skeleton weed and tomato bugs.

Cr Bell said borrowing \$8 million to help pay for the whole project "causes me concern".

"We can get a \$4.7 million pool done quickly – I've got no problems with that – but the \$23 million looks burdensome, we can't afford it," he said.

"Seriously troubled"

Cr Sally Craddock said she too was "seriously troubled" by the \$8 million loan.

The plan is to build new facilities for football, cricket, hockey, soccer, rugby, tennis, netball and basketball, a function centre for 200 people and a 25-metre unheated outdoor pool that will open only in summer.

Cr Chitty said she would "like to see us committed to getting this pool built" but added that "sporting facilities are very poor – we need new facilities in Toodyay".

Councillors voted 6-2 (Crs Bell and Craddock against) to borrow \$8 million for the project, dependent on the shire getting \$9 million from the Federal Government (after at least two earlier failed attempts).

Mr Scott said if there was no federal money "we will proceed with the pool" anyway.

What will it take for councillors to realise that a pool should come first and everything else after – if ratepayers can afford it?

Buried in the small print was a plan for the new sports ground to be used for community events such as the annual Toodyay Agricultural Show.

Such a move – which is likely to be

opposed by Toodyay Agricultural Society – will enable the shire to subdivide and sell the current 164-year-old showground, which includes a historic grandstand, exhibition hall, animal and produce display sheds and other facilities.

This is all about selling off WA's second oldest showground to pay off shire debt – don't be surprised if the destruction of priceless local heritage becomes the cost of building a new sports centre, or again puts building a pool on the back burner.

Fresh air: It was a breath of fresh air when Cr Bell introduced two new motions on notice at the end of the meeting.

One was to require the CEO to compare Toodyay's annual rates with those levied by other similar WA shires, presumably as a precursor to honouring Cr Bell's election pledge to review shire rates.

His other motion sought to compare Toodyay's local laws for sand, rock and gravel quarries with extractive industry local laws in other shires.

Both passed 8-0 despite Mr Scott's suggestion that councillors could do their own rates research online.

"The risk with any analysis is that it may be superficial and not considered in the context of the needs of local government, or not comparing like with like," Mr Scott wrote.

He also said a balanced budget model used for distributing federal funds to local government "makes for interesting reading for those who enjoy numbers".

Oh really?

Mr Scott said he supported both motions, which was a curious thing to say for a shire employee who doesn't have a vote and whose job it is to do what council tells him to do.

We trust his rates analysis will not be "superficial" or lack "context", which is probably why he was asked to do it in the first place, and we expect the result to "make for interesting reading" for all ratepayers, not just "those who enjoy numbers".

Prime asset: And lastly a positive note.

The shire's prime mover – the vehicle, not Mr Scott – is terminally ill and needs replacement.

The choice was whether to buy a new one for \$200,000 or to lease.

Works and Services Manager Scott Patterson acquitted himself extremely well when asked to explain the pros and cons – leasing was less risky for about the same price, and \$30,000 cheaper in the current financial year, he said.

Mr Patterson appears totally across his job and showed he is a great asset to the shire.

Councillors voted 6-2 to lease, with Crs Rob Welburn and Eric Twine against.

Shire approves trucks, quarry near homes

Continued from Page 1.

MAIN Roads WA says the Bailup quarry expansion "is acceptable subject to conditions", including a new turn-off and road widening – to be paid for by the applicant – where the gravel trucks enter Toodyay Road and better sight lines for trucks turning right into Toodyay Road.

This is in addition to a further 800 heavy trucks using Toodyay Road six days a week each year at another quarry near Lovers Lane, Toodyay.

The Toodyay Shire Council last month approved the Toodyay quarry despite objections from residents in a nearby rural residential subdivision, some within 500 metres of the rock, sand and gravel site.

The Shire of Toodyay said Main Roads WA was consulted about the Toodyay quarry and had raised no objections to more heavy trucks from the site using Toodyay Road.

The Toodyay quarry will operate six days a week – including Saturdays – from 6am to 5pm and will involve blasting and crushing operations, and heavy truck movements from 7am.

The Toodyay quarry was approved 6-2 last month, with Crs Ben Bell (East Ward) and Paula Greenway (West Ward) opposed.

Residents who oppose the Bailup quarry expansion have until Tuesday December 19 to send written submissions to the Shire of Mundaring.

See *Bat in the Belfry* (above).

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New 2J 2AIR 105.3FM starts programming local shows

2J 2AIR volunteer Mark Greenway helps Toodyay Shire President Brian Rayner record a station identification message for new locally recorded radio shows starting this month.

Christmas blitz to help keep festive season safe

Police Beat

With Sgt Warren Conder
Toodyay Police Station



TOODYAY police are gearing up for an all-out local road traffic safety blitz over the Christmas and New Year holiday period.

“Be prepared to be stopped and breath-tested, including on Christmas Day,” Toodyay police chief Sgt Warren Conder said.

“Our officers will be out in force, as will be police in the rest of the Wheatbelt.

“I make no apology for that – the Wheatbelt has one of the highest records for fatalities in the state.

“Toodyay will do its best to prevent that. We will be stopping everyone and everything, from bikes to semi-trailers.

“If a pilot lands a plane in the main street, I’ll breath test him too.

“We want everyone to have a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

“The best way we can do that is to help ensure our roads stay safe at all times.”

Two serious accidents

TWO SERIOUS traffic accidents on local roads have kept Toodyay police busy.

A heavily laden wheat truck pulling three trailers overturned on Bejoording Road early last month, spilling more than 50 tonnes of freshly harvested grain onto the verge and into a nearby paddock.

The accident occurred about 7.30am when the truck’s third trailer drifted onto the soft verge on the left of the road, causing the driver to lose control.

All three wheat trailers rolled onto their sides, dragging the truck with them.

The driver was shaken but not hurt. Some workers travelling in a ute were first on the scene and stopped to help.

While this was going on, a third, smaller car slammed into the back of the ute, causing the small vehicle to be written off.

Police inquiries are continuing.

In the second serious accident, a young driver was airlifted to hospital after she lost control of her car on Toodyay Road near Lovers Lane.

Her vehicle veered off the road on a left-hand bend and came to rest upside down in nearby bushland.

Police inquiries are continuing.

IGA theft

POLICE are hunting three young adults who stole groceries worth a total of \$500 from Toodyay’s IGA supermarket.

The robbery occurred about 6.30pm on



50 tonnes of freshly harvested wheat spilt in Bojoording Road truck rollover.

Sunday October 1 and was captured on the store’s closed-circuit video security cameras.

A young man was seen carrying a shopping basket while his two female accomplices filled it with stolen goods.

“He was even shoving meat packs down the front of his pants,” Sgt Conder said.

Police believe the three thieves were from out of town and made their getaway in a white ute. Inquiries are continuing.

Town speeders warned

MOTORISTS breaking the 40km/h speed

limit through the town’s main shopping precinct will be targeted by local police this month.

“I’m getting fed up with people speeding down Stirling Terrace,” Sgt Conder said.

“Some are doing more than 60km/h.

“This is particularly dangerous for visitors, shoppers and children on the busy main street, including during school holidays.

“Trucks and cars will be stopped and drivers issued with infringement notices if they are speeding.

“We’ll probably breath test them too.”

New cops in town

TOODYAY has a new police officer in Probationary Const. Will Van De Ven, who graduated from the WA Police Academy last March before starting a two-year trial.

Prob. Const. Van De Ven worked with breath and drug testing units after graduation, followed by a stint at Northam Police Station before being transferred to Toodyay, which is his home town.

Another new local police officer, from Morangup, is due to start in Toodyay this month.



New Toodyay police officer Will Van De Ven.

Rangers on hold

PLANS for a new junior Police Ranger group in Toodyay have been put on hold, pending further recruiting.

“We got six young starters when I put out a call to parents in September but I’ve been away on seven weeks’ leave and we need about 20 to make it viable,” Sgt Conder said.

“If more parents come forward, we will be able to start in the New Year.”

Sgt Conder said WA’s Police Ranger program encouraged boys and girls aged 12-17 to learn life skills and get involved in community activities that could help their future careers.

Toodyay Police Rangers would gain an opportunity to learn basic contemporary policing skills, including instruction and practice in using navigational and communications equipment, bushcraft and survival skills.

“Participants can also gain extra points for their secondary school WA Certificate of Education, which is recognised by universities, employers and other training bodies,” Sgt Conder said.

“It also paves the way for young boys and girls who may wish to enter the police force as a future career.”



Three alleged thieves caught on camera at Toodyay IGA store last month.



Driver airlifted to hospital after Toodyay Road car rollover near Lovers Lane last month.

Choosing respect turns tables on bullying behaviour

Toodyay Community Safety and Crime Prevention Association
Desraé Clarke

THE CHOOSE Respect initiative to combat bullying was created for Armadale high school students in 2004 by program managing director Gary Butcher.

The program has been used in schools at Kallaroo, Armadale and Bunbury, and shifts the focus from bullying behaviour to calling on students and schools to ‘choose respect’.

Businesses also use the program to foster a safe and more productive workplace, while sports organisations find the program fosters a safe, positive environment for players, coaches, umpires and referees.

Choose Respect has become a catalyst to bring people together to work for a better and safe community.

Our association supports the initiative and will promote it to the local community, businesses, schools and sports groups.

Morning tea with local cops

A community morning tea to discuss the program will be held Monday December 11 commencing at 9.30am at the Cola Café.

Please join us and discuss this initiative with our local police and our association representatives plus any security, safety issues, etc.

Call 000 for emergencies only. Toodyay police can be contacted on 9574 9555 and Crimestoppers on, 1800 333 000.

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EMERGENCY SERVICES



A fantastic turn out at All Brigades Training in Wundowie on October 28. Photo: Wayne Weaver.

Salvos seek help to fuel crews

IF YOU would like to volunteer during a bush fire emergency but cannot actually fight the fire, have you considered helping in the background?

The Salvation Army would welcome volunteers from the Toodyay area who would be able to volunteer their time during any bush fire or other emergency that may occur in the region.

During emergency activations, the Salvos volunteers are placed on a roster system and work around the clock for as long as is required.

Volunteers help by assisting and feeding emergency workers and in evacuation centres as required.

New volunteers are very welcome and by emailing ben.day@aus.salvationarmy.org you will be sent a link to complete an online food safety course, and your details are added to the database.

In the event of an emergency within your area you would be sent an SMS informing of the need for volunteers and instructions on how to be involved.

If you need any further information, email Ben Day, Director of Emergency Services with the Salvation Army – WA Division.

All fired up for red-hot charity calendar

TOODYAY firefighter Darren MacGregor is among a group of Perth's hottest firefighters who are turning up the heat to help WA children as part of the sizzling 2018 Perth Firefighters Calendar.

Mr MacGregor says it was an honour to have the opportunity to support Princess Margaret Hospital's burns unit by participating in the Perth Firefighters Calendar, along with 13 of his colleagues.

Now known as Mr May, Darren said the opportunity to assist Perth Children's Hospital Foundation to better the lives of children facing truly heart-breaking circumstances was humbling.

"As both an uncle and former teacher I have seen countless children, including my niece and past students, receive life changing treatments from Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH)," he said.

"I decided to get involved with the calendar to continue to help raise vital funds to help provide better medical facilities for children in their hour of greatest need.

"It's a fantastic cause and I'm really happy to see the brigade and many of my close mates giving their support for this very meaningful fun fundraiser," he said.

Perth Children's Hospital Foundation CEO Denys Pearce said the foundation's long-



Mr May, Toodyay firefighter Darren MacGregor.

standing partnership with Perth firefighters had been a huge success, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars over almost a decade to help fund cutting-edge equipment and research at the hospital's burns unit.

"We have been overwhelmed by the WA community's incredible support for the state's firefighters, raising more than \$1 million for PMH's burns unit through the sale of the calendars over the years," he said.

"Perth Children's Hospital Foundation is enormously grateful to all the firefighters involved with the 2018 edition and we extend our sincere thanks to all the fires involved for their unwavering commitment to helping raise funds for the WA children who need it most."

Calendars, available for \$15 online at shop.pchf.org.au, make a wonderful Christmas present.

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

Loose fridge gets the flick from cash-conscious crews

**Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
Coondle Nunile
Max J Heath**

G'DAY from the Coondle Nunile Fire shed. Presently things are cruising along nicely at the shed; it seems that there hasn't been too much fire activity.

On a call-out to a fire in Bejoording, the new 1.4 unfortunately decided to 'do its thing' with the particulate filter, and did a burn out. Apparently, it was not too bad.

We have recently had another experienced firefighter join us from another area, Bakers Hill.

Welcome Tania to our midst. Also, Aaron Norgate has completed his training and is now qualified for the fireground.

All these recently trained members will be put with an experienced team and well-and-truly looked after.

At our last monthly meeting the deluge system was discussed and there will be extra training on this system to protect ourselves.

There have been a few call-outs. One lucky one was on Coondle Drive; it was virtually spotted from the shed and got onto very quickly.

Our 2.4 has recently been taken away for an upgrade and we received a message that our truck fridge was not fixed as per

requirements, although strapped down and definitely couldn't go anywhere.

However, the installation did not please some people. To have it fixed correctly (for which the Department of Fire and Emergency Services wouldn't pay the cost) was going to cost the brigade \$4600 to tie down a \$1000 fridge. We have decided to remove the fridge for the time being.

It was good to hear that our professional fire-fighters got a wage rise of some sort this year but what of the volunteers?

In the last couple of years, the brigades have all been given a fuel card for members to be able to acquire fuel, but in its wisdom the government has cut the volunteers fuel card in half.

It is not much but it is something. So much for the volunteers.

Four of our members attended a training at Julimar on Sunday November 26 for training on a system for getting trucks out of bogs. They were very impressed with what they saw.

We have another of our members doing her driver training for the 2.4, so we will soon have another heavy-vehicle driver on the road. Well done Jane.

In closing, we from Coondle Nunile would like to wish one and all a very safe and happy Christmas and a great New Year.



Morangup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade thanks Margaret for donating the beautifully decorated Ginger Bread House for the raffle every year. Photo: Caroline Williams.

Wind up windows or cop the deluge

**Morangup Volunteer Bush Fire
Brigade
Sue Maddrell**

WE'VE had a busy month: a few fires in the shire but none that took the brigade away for too long.

Rob Koch put the brigade through an exercise with our new deluge system on the 2.4 truck. There was a good turnout and we learnt that even if it is an exercise all windows must be up.

The deluge system is designed to protect fire fighters if there is a burn over.

Water sprays are generated from points on the truck including the wheels.

We recently had news that two of our life members had passed away in the last couple of months – David Plenty, a past captain and Bill Lenke, former equipment officer.

It is easy to forget those who have gone before and put in good work along the way.

Bill still lived in Morangup but David moved some years ago to Kalbarri where

he did great work with the Kalbarri St John Ambulance. Our condolences to their families.

The big event this month was our annual Christmas barbecue for the Morangup community. We had a great turnout.

It was good to see quite a number of children at the party all enjoying themselves either in the playground or playing basketball and generally running around.

Thanks must go to Sharon, our welfare officer, for organising the event and all the helpers on the night.

Everyone brought along either a salad or dessert to share. There were plenty of raffle prizes. Thank you to those who donated prizes.

The brigade meets on the third Saturday of the month and always welcomes men and women who are interested in becoming fire fighters.

Our captain Jeff Venn can be contacted on 0417 714 798 or, come along on a Saturday morning from 8.30-9am to check us out.

Ambos don't want to see you soon

**St John Ambulance
Carolynne Haigh**

WE WOULD like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us throughout the year.

Your support and attendance at our quiz night, open day and other demonstrations we have held is very much appreciated.

Thanks to the many of you who donate to our raffles and many more of you who repeatedly purchase the tickets.

Without your generosity it would be difficult to maintain the five ambulances we have in our sub centre.

During the months of December and January St John is offering a two-for-the-price-of-one deal for our first-aid courses.

You need to book and pay during this period, but the course can be for a later date. Please contact Carolynne for further details on 9574 2390.

Have you considered buying a first-aid kit for someone this Christmas? Please drop into the sub centre and have a look at the range we have available, along with some fantastic

pre-Christmas sale prices.

We are pleased to be able to say that after seven years of moving at a rather glacial pace we were finally successful in gaining a management order and a building permit for an ambulance depot to be built in Morangup.

Thank you to the Morangup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade for the temporary housing they gave us back in 2009; it won't be too long now before you can have that bay back.

On November 15 the footings were poured and the slab completed on November 21.

The septic tanks and leach drains were delivered and installed on November 24 and as we go to print the bricklayer should have commenced the brickwork.

For all those in Morangup who have dedicated their time and efforts to getting to this stage, we thank you.

The monster raffle, drawn at the Street Party on December 1, was won by Andrea.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

While we will have officers around throughout this period, we would prefer not to see you.



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EMERGENCY SERVICES

'Battle board' T cards help keep track of fires

Julimar Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
Grant Scobie

HAVE you ever wondered how Incident Control (i.e. the people in charge of a fire) has any idea about who is where on the fire ground, especially when the fire is large, and many appliances come from all over the state?

The first place they will look is on the T cards. A T card is a card, shaped like a T that each unit fills in before arriving at the fire and hands in to Incident Control.

The card contains the vehicle type, name, time of arrival, fire fighters' names and, after it's all over, time of departure.

Vehicle type includes fire appliances (2.4, 1.4, LT, 4.4), farmers' vehicles, police, machinery; anyone who is there to fight the fire.

On arrival, the unit is given a task and the card is put in a large folder (the 'battle board') appropriate to where they're sent.

Sectors are just a convenient way to subdivide the fire ground: in this instance, Sector A (lpha) may be on Julimar Road from Kane Road to Dreyer Road, Sector B (ravo) along Dreyer Road, etc.

However, extra help is underway with GPS tracking equipment.

Firstly, every fire brigade appliance can call up its location using a special button on the radio and find the coordinates on a map.

This can make it easier for Incident Control to picture exactly where a vehicle is.

At present all fire brigade appliances and some shire and other vehicles are now fitted with a system called AVL, Automatic Vehicle Location.

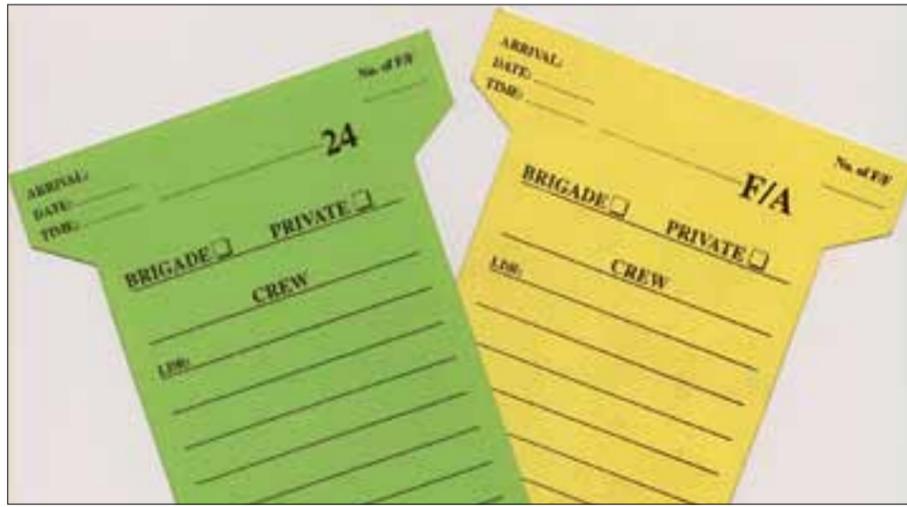
This provides up-to-date information from GPS units mounted on the vehicle as to exactly where it is and what it's doing.

And it's possible to check what happened with that vehicle from the minute it left its shed to when it returned, including engine on/off, lights and sirens on/off, direction of movement and current location.

This information is displayed on a map of the area and will become a very significant player in fire control and crew safety.

The Incident Controller will be able to look at a map on the wall with exact locations of all units on the fire ground.

This means they'll know that there's no one



T cards, part of the Incident Control's tracking system.

there when they want to light a backburn, there's three appliances who can help at a certain point, etc.

Safety-wise, apart from providing knowledge of where the unit is, there's also a 'panic' button in the vehicle which sends an alarm that a

vehicle is in distress.

This also goes off if the vehicle rolls over, a huge step forward in the safety of the crew.

And what about the T cards? Are they still required?

The answer is yes, due to the bit of information

on the card that the AVL can't do – fire fighters' names.

It's another important part of knowing who's on the fire ground.

How many people need to be fed? Have they all gone home or are they still out there?

When the vehicle has been out there for three days, has the crew changed and how many times?

Even though the vehicle remains, a T card is replaced with a new one when a new crew takes over so fire fighters' welfare is continually monitored.

One day, fire fighters will probably carry personal information devices (say watches).

These will link to whatever unit they're assigned to and will also tell whether that wearer has had a meal or a break.

It will probably even monitor their pulse rate, blood pressure and general health.

The future safety of fire fighters looks very promising.

Julimar VBFB shed is off Julimar Rd right opposite Blue Gum Way.

Friday night training and vehicle checks are a good time to come and meet the fires and see how we remember whose name goes on the T card.

Savvy hackers can hijack 'smart' teddy bears

Computer Safety

Phil Hart

'SMART' devices are becoming more popular.

Examples include smart TVs, kitchen gadgets, home security systems and personal fitness monitors.

If you can connect it to the internet, it is then a smart device.

Many of today's cars can also be accessed remotely so they are becoming smart devices.

These devices are part of the Internet of Things or 'IoT'.

Baby monitors are a great way of seeing what is happening to your loved one from another room but they can often be accessed by people anywhere in the world.

There are horror stories of strangers waking up babies in the middle of the night.

Smart toys such as teddy bears can also be taken over.

Imagine coming home at the end of a hot summer's day to find that somebody has switched your air conditioning to maximum heat.

The latest smart fridges can order replacement stock automatically.

A hacker could take over your smart fridge and order 25kg of cheese and \$300 worth of fresh meat – all on your credit card.

Even if you don't see any changes in the pictures on your home security webcams, hackers can still take them over for nefarious purposes and slow down your internet connection in the process.

Recently discovered smart devices that can be hacked include door locks and wheelchairs.

There are some things that you can do to

defend yourself.

Almost every smart device has an 'admin' user.

If the password is 'admin' or 'password', change it immediately, and write it down.

If the device manufacturer provides software updates, install them as soon as possible.

If you are thinking of buying a smart device, ask the shop if the device has good security against hackers.

Car manufacturers are making their new cars increasingly 'clever'.

Ask the showroom salesperson what the manufacturer is doing to prevent your vehicle from being hacked.

You can expect that your car's smart systems will be checked and updated every time it is serviced.

Happy surfing.



FESTIVE SEASON TRADING HOURS

Toodyay Bakery will be closed from 3pm 24th December, and reopens on 16th January 2018



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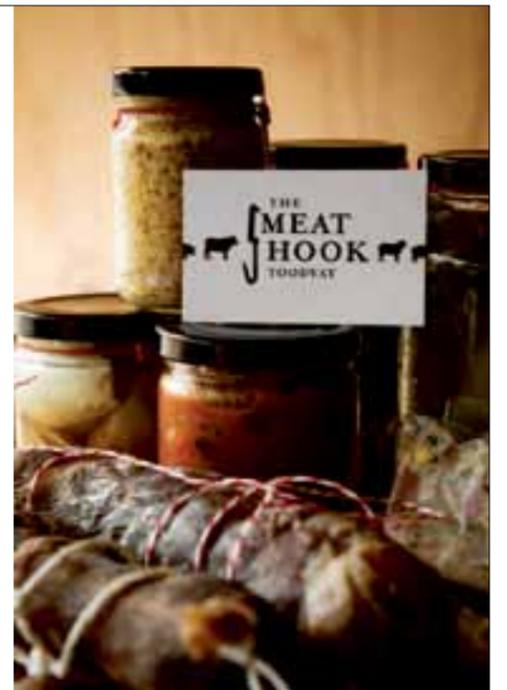
would like to thank all our loyal customers for their support throughout the year Jason & Cassie together with their staff and Luke, Anthea & Sam wish you all a happy and safe holiday season

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'Major cover-up' over legal fees, non-compliance

Toodyay Progress Association
Larry Graham, Chair

THERE has been a major cover-up of the cost of the Shire of Toodyay's controversial legal case against former CEO Graham Merrick and former shire president Charlie Wroth.

When the case started in 2014 and the amount sought to be recovered was only around \$150,000, legal costs were reasonably estimated to be around \$70-80,000.

When *The Toodyay Herald* asked in June 2014 "How much money has the Shire spent so far on legal costs...", the council was open and transparent, and answered "The Shire of Toodyay has spent \$21,728.50 on the above for 2013/14."

Two months later, when angrily debunking a ratepayer's suggestion that the council would not release financial information, the former shire president said: "You or whoever reported this to you have misinterpreted my comments".

"If there is a confidential settlement, the details of the alleged behaviour may never become public," he said.

"There was no suggestion that financial information would or should be hidden."

It is crystal clear from those answers that in 2014, the shire council saw no impediment to releasing information about case costs.

It also refuted allegations that financial information relating to this case would be hidden from public view.

This proper and accountable behaviour from the council should have continued but it did not, and as the costs went up, the desire to publicly talk about them went down.

Determined opposition from the council compelled our team of dedicated volunteers to spend more than 10 months this year trying to find out these costs, and after writing letters, asking questions and using WA Freedom of Information (FOI) law, we eventually achieved that result.

Because the council finally agreed to release what we sought, the FOI Commissioner did not need to make any orders to release the information and after reading the FOI documents, even Blind Freddy could see there never was any genuine reason for not releasing these costs.

But undeterred by the FOI outcome, our council is still pretending these costs are secret.

While clearly not secret, they are illuminating and we have learnt that council

decision-making processes for the legal case were unclear.

Some costing documents were inaccurate and misleading, the council has no idea of administrative costs, senior office holders were more interested in the election outcome than informing the public, decision makers appeared unaware of their legal responsibilities and our councillors were happy to keep being paid while remaining asleep at the wheel.

At last month's meeting, the council reverted to cover-up mode and would not confirm the costs.

We think that it is probably because they still really don't know the full amount.

However, we think we do and can now advise ratepayers that they paid \$568,803.26 in legal bills.

Because the council spent more than half a million dollars trying to get back around \$150,000, we are not surprised that it has fought so tenaciously to oppose releasing the information.

It would have remained under the carpet where it had been swept without our group working so hard to unearth it.

As shoddy as their public performance has been, it all worsened during the FOI process when our council failed to comply with the Act, broke an agreement and demonstrated a very poor understanding of its legal obligations.

We think that this represents a serious

problem in public administration and we think our councillors should deal with it.

Watching their faces while I asked questions at last month's council meeting was instructive.

Councillors appeared blissfully unaware of what had been going on, and seemed surprised by the information we put forward.

And that really is extraordinary.

Not only does the administration have legal responsibilities to keep the council informed, when we referred this most recent legislative non-compliance to the WA Department of Local Government for investigation, we also sent the relevant documents to each of the councillors.

We hope councillors read those papers, as we hope they now take action to require the council to give ratepayers some accountability, preferably with a full public explanation of their decision-making processes and an audited financial statement of the costs.

Surely that is not too much to ask of a council that spent a total of \$568,803.26 of ratepayers' money on a legal action that, when it was settled "without any admission of liability and on a purely commercial basis ...", effectively cleared everyone of any wrongdoing.

As always, we point out that we are an apolitical public advocacy body that has not and will not endorse candidates in council elections.

IN MOORE WITH LOVE

I am extremely proud to be a founding sponsor of Toodyay's new **community radio station, 2J 2AIR** 105.3FM. Launched on November 18, 2J 2AIR will be live 24/7 and will feature music and assorted programs with an emphasis on community information. Working closely with the Toodyay Community Resource Centre and the Toodyay Shire, 2J 2AIR will serve an important role connecting community members and building social capital. A community radio station is a great asset for local residents and visitors to the region and I commend the efforts of those who have worked hard to make the station a reality. Follow the 2j2air Community Radio facebook page or you can email the station at: 2j2air@gmail.com

November 19 marked the start of WALGA's **Road Ribbon for Road Safety** campaign which runs until January 5. More than 4,100 people were killed or seriously injured on regional WA roads from 2012 to 2016, an appalling statistic. We can all do our bit to reduce road fatalities and injuries. PLEASE stay alert and drive to the conditions.

I will close by wishing you and your family a Merry and safe Christmas and a happy and healthy 2018. I will look forward to working on behalf of the Toodyay community next year.



Ratepayers face huge debt for new sport complex

Continued from Page 1.

NEWLY ELECTED Cr Di Granger said she strongly supported a pool but wanted it indoors and heated for people of all ages to use year-round for sport, fitness, recreation and health, such as aquatic therapy for elderly pain management and mental health.

"You have a great asset that sits there for 12 months, why not promote using it all-year?" she said.

Mr Scott said that if this month's federal funding bid failed, "we will still proceed with a pool" and that it "could be heated and covered at a later date".

However, Cr Bell said a shire commitment to borrow \$8 million for the \$23 million project "causes me concern".

"We can get a \$4.7 million pool done quickly - I've got no problems with that - but the full \$23 million project looks burdensome, we simply can't afford it.

"We can easily afford to build a pool with existing reserves and a small loan instead of borrowing such a large amount to build facilities that we mostly already have.

"Build a pool first and all the other things can be added later, when we can afford it."

Cr Craddock agreed, saying she was "seriously troubled" by the size of the proposed \$8 million loan.

"I don't see how we are going to manage



Artist's drawing of the shire's proposed new \$23 million sport and recreation precinct with a new hockey pitch in foreground and swimming pool to the right of a new football oval.

the cost," she said.

The shire's business case says there is a "major financial risk" in the project's "scope, specifications, and cost control", and a "moderate financial risk" for "utilities infrastructure" that are "yet to be finalised and may vary considerably from estimates".

Shire Deputy President Therese Chitty - who chaired last month's council meeting

while new Shire President Brian Rayner was on leave - said she wanted a pool but Toodyay also needed new sports facilities because the town's existing playing fields and courts were "very poor".

Cr Judy Dow - who with Cr Chitty is a senior Toodyay Tennis Club committee member - said: "our sports facilities are really run down - I'd like to see the whole lot built".

"We must be the only town without a pool," she said.

"Unless we start somewhere, we'll still be talking about this in 10 years."

Cr Rob Welburn said building a swimming pool was one of the most talked about, polarising issues in years.

"It's a big infrastructure project but we have to get the ball rolling," he said.

"It will be tight but it is serviceable."

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Herald helps Simon track Wedge-tailed eaglet

Ieva Tomsons

MURDOCH University PhD student Simon Cherriman started using advanced Global Positioning System technology in 2013 to track the movements of Wedge-tailed Eagles throughout the state.



It's a long way to the top...to tag an eaglet.

In the June *Herald* Simon asked landholders in Morangup and Gidgegannup to provide information on possible nesting sites which he could access and monitor.

Readers' tips led Simon to John Ffarington's 4047ha (10,000 acre) property which straddles the shires of Toodyay and Swan where he found six nests in the territory of one breeding pair.

Five were inactive but deep in the pristine bush one nest perched on top of a 30m Wandoo was home to a nine-week-old female chick.

The *Herald* was lucky enough to join seven others who recently accompanied Simon to see him fit the eaglet with a \$5000 solar-powered transmitter* which will provide data on the bird's movements for the next two years.

After bumping along 6km of dusty tracks we followed the trails of emus and roos 400m into the bush to the nesting site.

Simon had banded the chick on an earlier visit with a stainless steel national identification band on the right leg and a yellow aluminium band on the left which locates the hills region as the bird's area of origin.

The tricky and time-consuming task of firing up fishing line with a ging (slingshot) as a guide for the 50m climbing rope had also been completed ahead of our visit.

Standing at 2.07m (6ft 8inches) Simon cracked a few jokes about his stature, kicked off his boots, attached the climbing harness and started to winch himself skywards to remove the eaglet from its nest and lower it to ground in a zipped bag.

An experienced and skilful climber, Simon scaled 25m to the nest, bagged the bird and sent it down in just over 15 minutes to his long-time friend and fellow conservationist Andrew Moore who held the bag aloft until Simon climbed down.

"It weighs about as much as three chickens," said Andrew who held the hooded eaglet throughout the delicate process of fitting the transmitter harness under the bird's wings and securing the Teflon straps at the breast to support the 70g transmitter nestled on the back.



Simon checks that the transmitter is correctly positioned before returning the eaglet to its nest. Photos: Chris Bean.

Cutting the straps to the correct length and sewing them together involved precision measurements and intricate sewing by Simon who noted that high school sewing classes had finally paid off.

With a bit of super glue to seal the strap edges to prevent fraying, it was time to take the hood off the chick and put it back in the bag for its trip home.

All of us were relieved when Simon successfully placed the bird in its nest and safely returned to earth – especially Simon's dad Doug who was watching his son catch an eagle in the wild for the first time.

During the fitting of the harness Simon sustained numerous bites.

"This is a very feisty bird but it's a good sign for its survival in the wild," he said.

The sun was setting as we left the nesting site and we all paused to take one last look at the young eagle which was standing tall

on the edge of its nest – magnificent.

* The transmitter, a vital part of Simon's PhD study, was sponsored by Tronox and the Department of Parks and Wildlife.



The nine-week-old eaglet's massive talons.



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Members get into the Christmas spirit at the CWA's last meeting for the year.

Malteser and wine glass hats

CWA
Elizabeth Mansom

THE CWA's October meeting featured guest speaker, Graeme Bissett, Manager of Planning and Development, who gave a presentation on the Shire of Toodyay's Draft Planning Strategy including time for questions and discussion.

Members are very grateful to Mr Bissett for his time to help clarify their understanding of this important piece of shire documentation.

Eleanor, our gardener, is going to plant two Manchurian Pears by the bench seat in Charcoal Lane to provide shade.

A jumble sale was organised in the hall on Saturday November 19. Sellers moved unwanted items, buyers found treasure and CWA made just over \$100.

The meeting on Thursday November 23 was our last for the year.

There will be an informal meeting in January and the AGM and first general meeting for 2018 will be held on February 22, the fourth Thursday of the month.

During the break we have organised for repairs and maintenance to be carried out on the hall.

Members had sat through the last meeting resplendent in Christmas hats; Viv's festooned with Maltesers, Margot's an

inspired wire wineglass and Jen looking suspiciously like a leprechaun.

Hats came off and we descended on the goodie-laden table, plus Judith's punch and Ev's beautifully decorated cake, half of which we're saving for Christmas lunch.

On Monday December 11, Maxine Walker will represent our branch at the Toodyay District High School to present a \$100 scholarship, something we do every year.

We're all going to Duke's Inn in Northam for Christmas lunch on December 7.

We were disappointed that this turned out to be the same day our sister city branch Bayswater planned their Christmas outing.

We will not convene again until Thursday January 25, when an informal planning meeting has been scheduled for 10am.

All of us at CWA wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a safe, healthy and prosperous 2018.

CWA meets at 1pm on the fourth Thursday of the month in the CWA Hall in Stirling Terrace, Toodyay, except in December and January.

There is plenty of parking in Charcoal Lane, with disabled access from Charcoal Lane down the side of the hall.

Hall bookings are being taken by Glenys Clabaugh on 9574 5100 or 0427 478 325.

Small grass seeds cause big problems for many pets

Dr Amber Miller

WITH the weather starting to warm up, grass seed season is upon us once again.

Grass seeds may be small but they can cause big problems for our pets.

Common grass seed-related issues include seeds in the ears, in the eyes or nose and seeds burrowing between the toes.

However, grass seeds are very good at sticking to animals' coats and can go almost anywhere.

Signs of grass seeds will depend on which part of the body is affected.

For example, a grass seed in the ear is likely to cause the pet to shake its head and scratch the affected ear, but a seed in the nose tends to result in sneezing or snorting.

Animals with grass seeds between the toes may lick the area, be unwilling to put weight on the paw and you may notice swelling or pus between the toes.

It is difficult to completely prevent grass seed-related issues but there are things you can do to reduce your pet's risk.

Keep pets out of areas of long dry grass if possible.

If they do get into areas of seeded grass check the ears (outside and inside), eyes, mouth and paws for seeds afterwards.

Dogs and cats with long coats can have the hair clipped around their paws to reduce the risk of grass seeds sticking.

If you suspect your pet may have a grass-seed-related problem, please contact your vet.

Fashion on Field pays dividends

THE FASHIONS on the Field winner at the 2017 Toodyay Races recently raced away with the WA Country Cups Fashions on the Field at the Winterbottom Stakes at Ascot.

Elizabeth Winlo, from Northam, won the Vernice Fashions on the Field at this year's Toodyay Picnic Race Day in September.

As a winner at a country race day, Elizabeth was eligible to enter the WA Country Cups Wildcard Competition, representing Toodyay.

After winning many different heats, she won the grand final where she competed against finalists from regional heats all over WA (including Pilbara, Goldfields, Gascoyne, Midwest, Wheatbelt, Peel, South West, Great Southern and Kimberley).

Elizabeth's prize includes a racing holiday for two to London to attend Royal Ascot, \$10,000 spending money and \$5000 worth of diamond jewellery and a voucher for a designer handbag.

"I went to the track for the first time when I was five or six with my grandad. I just love the horses, I love the colours. It's my hobby and my passion," said Elizabeth.

"It's a dream come true. I've never been to England and I just can't wait."



Elizabeth's winning style on the track.

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Seasons Greetings

We would sincerely like to express our gratitude for the loyal support and fun times our customers from Toodyay and surrounding districts have once again given us.

We wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Lyn and Andrew

 16 Stirling Terrace TOODYAY Phone 9574 2062

Harvest in full swing after stop-start opening

Toodyay Agricultural Alliance
Frank Panizza

THE HARVEST season is well under way after a stop-start beginning and is a welcome feature after the heavy and unseasonal summer rains.

Toodyay farmers report they are happy with the way the season has unfolded and are harvesting average crops.

Canola yields have been about average but with very high oils levels.

Protein levels in barley and wheat have been low, leading to some downgrading to lower grades; protein level in malting barley is important in beer production.

Further afield, the northern and eastern areas of the Wheatbelt have had a poor season with yields well below average and, unfortunately for farmers in those areas, the lower yields have also come with poor grain quality.

On a brighter note, local enterprise Candeloro Farms has adopted new harvest technology this year, one of the few farms in the state to have done so.

Invented in WA, the technology separates fine chaff containing weed seeds on exit from the harvester and mechanically pulverises it, thus destroying the seed embryo and making the seed sterile.

This is a very important adaptation, as apart from burning chaff dumps, no other viable non-chemical weed control exists.

Jerome Candeloro, who farms with wife Jayne, his parents Joe and Maria and brothers Dion and Aaron and their families in Toodyay and Goomalling, said that this is another step forward in the long battle against herbicide-resistant weeds.

Mr Candeloro has fitted Harrington Seed Destroyers to two new New Holland harvesters purchased this year, as well as a rival Seed Terminator to an older machine.

"Both types of machines are working well, apart from a few teething problems," Mr Candeloro said.



A double rainbow heralds a wheatbelt storm. Photo: Frank Panizza.

"This is new technology which we are happy to adopt as it gives us another method of controlling weeds without always relying on chemicals."

The non-chemical control of weeds escaping herbicide treatments is considered to be essential for long-term protection against herbicide-resistant weeds in cropping systems.

The busy harvest season will lead to an increase in heavy vehicles transporting grain and movement of oversize farming equipment on our road network – a timely reminder to all road users to take care and be aware of other road users at all times.

A reminder also to farmers about fatigue management of your employees and yourselves.

Locust activity

TOODYAY residents and road users would have noticed large numbers of locusts recently.

While officially they are not in plague proportion, they are very widespread and are causing the usual problems of fouling car radiators and windscreens.

A plague is usually declared by the Department of Agriculture when the numbers of locusts are large enough to cause significant damage to crops or cause severe damage to public facilities such as sporting grounds.

Currently the locusts have not caused local losses as the crops had dried off

before the locusts arrived.

However, locusts are being caught up during harvesting operations, leading to some contamination of grain.

The 2017 autumn locust watch map published by the Department of Agriculture revealed mostly low to moderate locust numbers for WA.

However, the long wet and cool spring has allowed locusts that usually hatch in spring to have green feed while they matured to an age where they could fly, and they are now able to move about as adults to seek out green plant material.

It is likely that locust numbers will slowly decline when sources of green feed disappear as the season progresses.

I would like to wish all residents a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.



Jerome Candeloro standing beside one of the two New Holland harvesters with the fitted Harrington Seed Destroyers. Photo: Frank Panizza.

State's best show looking for new volunteers

Toodyay Agricultural Society
Alison Wroth, Chief Steward

ON BEHALF of the president, committee and membership of the Toodyay Agricultural Society we would like to thank you all for supporting this year's Show.

It is well known that it has become very hard to organise any type of event in

the last few years and, depending on the weather, pull them off with a good profit at the end of the day.

So, we extend our heartfelt thanks for the support, backing and sponsorship from the community and all those who help throughout the year.

If you enjoyed this year's entertainment and the 'showing of Toodyay', look forward to next year's 165th Toodyay Agricultural Show which is already being planned.

The new committee after our AGM in February 2018, will once again organise a country show that is highly commended near and far as the show to attend for entertainment, trade displays, children's participation and local produce, both agricultural and craft; in an endeavour to Show Toodyay, at the most historic and scenic showgrounds in the state.

Every five years, if the society is financially able, we endeavour to hold a Show Ball prior to the show in October.

This will probably be on the cards for next year with any luck.

For anybody who is interested in joining one of the best committees around to organise the 165th Toodyay Agricultural Show, come along to the Youth Hall at the showgrounds on Monday February 12 at 7.30pm.

All committee members are to be, or become, members of the society and to say you will enjoy yourself is putting it mildly.

Spread the load, take on a job that you are interested in and the event that we plan will be one for the history books.

Tea and nibbles will be supplied after the meeting.

To wind up this year, may you all have a wonderful Christmas and a safe and healthy 2018. See you in the New Year.

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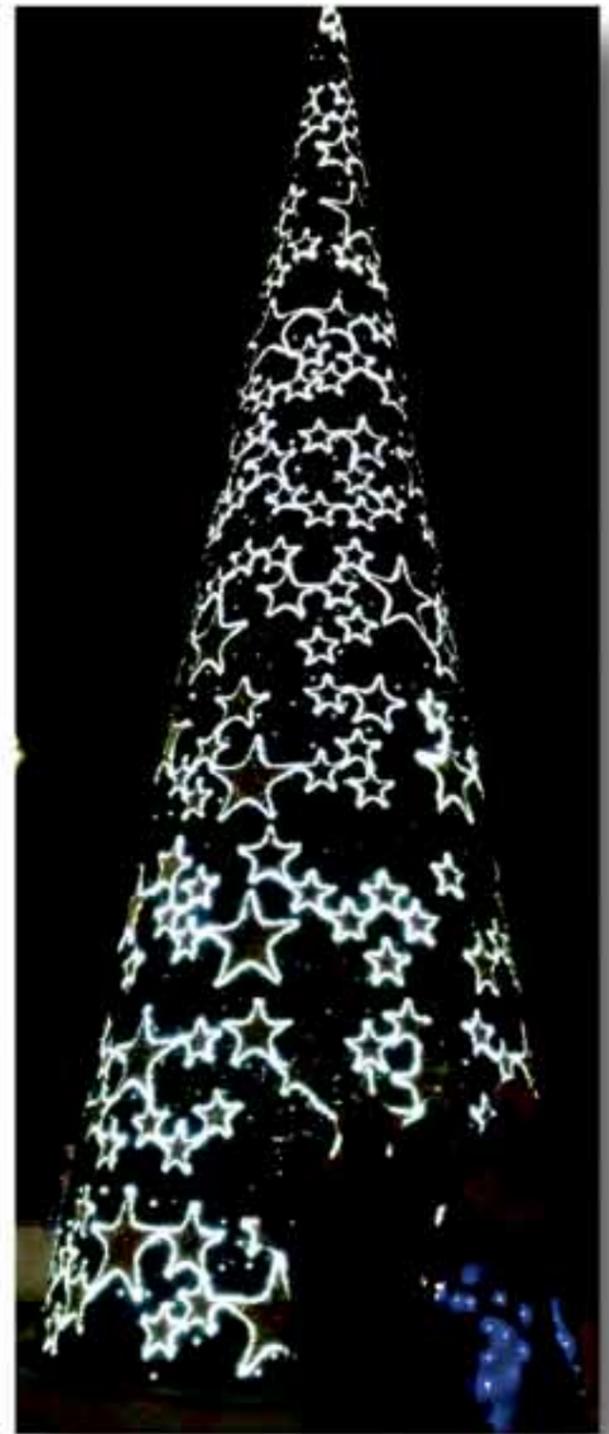
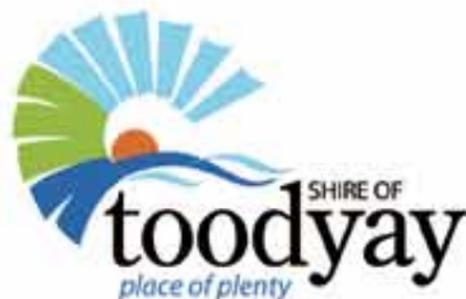


THANK YOU

...to our highly valued Sponsors, the Shire of Toodyay, the Op Shop, Makit Hardware and the Bendigo Bank.

Thanks also goes to the Toodyay Community for making the 2017 Christmas Street Party a great success and a night to remember.

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Peter tiptoes to Tiny Tim's *Tulips*

Toodyay Music Club
Jenny Edgecombe

IT'S DECEMBER already, and festive season activities are in full swing.

As always, groups of our members will be providing entertainment at parties held in aged-care facilities in the region.

These outings are delightful, especially when residents and their families start joining in with their old favourite songs.

Speaking of old favourites, what an enjoyable club afternoon we had in November, listening to members' offerings on our theme of Flowers, Trees and Shrubs.

There were songs about coconut trees, orchids, wattle, thyme, pussy-willows, pines and of course, thousands of gum trees and millions of roses.

We listened to quite a range of styles as well, from Peter's squeaky Tiny Tim 'tribute' in *Tiptoe Through the Tulips* to Eileen's lovely delivery of *The Rose* (harmonies courtesy of Maurice).

Incidentally, guitar accompaniment by Mark in various group items this month suggested that it won't be long before he will be doing some solo work.

It has been a great joy to hear his impressive progress during the year.

Will and Margaret added a lively note to the day with a rousing rendition of *Daisy a Day*.

On a quieter note, after the usual chaotic catching up over afternoon tea, a happy sigh passed around the room as Margaret read the classic Wordsworth poem, *Daffodils*.

Collette's sweet, clear voice was admirably suited to *The Olive Tree*, a haunting song apparently only ever released by Judith Durham.

Spencer continued the Australian connection with the wistful ballad, *A Bushman Can't Survive (in City Life)*.

Visitors are always welcome, especially when they come armed with guitar, as Mike did.

His contribution was much appreciated, and we hope he'll be making return visits to Toodyay in the future.

Maurice presented the catchy *Flowers on the Wall*, while Brian's impressive whistling added piquancy to the delicate air, *A Rose in her Hair*.

Should I mention that certain people brought down the tone towards the end of the afternoon with a somewhat raucous Stones number? Perhaps not.

Well, it was loud and enthusiastic, and it actually did mention flowers.

Next meeting: Saturday December 9, 1-4pm, CWA Hall, Stirling Terrace, Toodyay (no meeting in January).

Visitors welcome. Any style of music, so long as it is acoustic.

For more information, please talk to Joe on 0400 862 694.



(Left to right) Peter Blyth (Elleker, WA, 3rd), Ken Tough (Pretty Beach, NSW 2nd), Keith Lethbridge (Armadale, WA, Australian Champion), Brian Rayner, President of Toodyay Shire, and Bill Gordon, President of WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinnners Association.

Toodyay is bush poetry capital as bards pull out all stops

WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinnners Association
Bill Gordon, President

TOODYAY has justified its position as the Bush Poetry Capital of WA.

The biggest and best line-up of poets from all parts of the country competed in the Australian Bush Poetry Championships in the Toodyay Memorial Hall over the weekend of November 3-5, with 25 to 29 poets competing in each section for the titles and trophies made by Dave Smith, one of our best yarnspinnners and last year's winner of that event.

With capacity crowds filling the hall each day, the bards were at their best with some outlandish humorous poems but also some emotionally heart-wrenching serious poetry as well.

WA Bush Poets president Bill Gordon expressed thanks to Toodyay Shire and community for the support received, both financial and physical, to make the weekend the best yet.

Over the five years the State Championships have been held in Toodyay, more and more community groups and businesses have offered assistance and the staff at the Visitors Centre have been incredibly helpful.

Two new Australian Bush Poetry Champions emerged from the Act-Belong-Commit Bush Poetry Festival: Keith 'Cobber' Lethbridge

(WA) won the male title from Ken Tough (NSW) and Peter Blyth (WA) while Sue Pearce (NSW) had a narrow victory in the female competition over Rhonda Tallnash (VIC) and Carmel Wooding (QLD).

Keith also won the WA crown from Peter Blyth and Bill Gordon.

The festival got off to a great start with a meet-and-greet in the beer garden of the Freemasons Hotel on the Thursday night.

Friday morning started with a workshop conducted by Noel Stallard, one of the judges along with Carol Heuchan and Jack Drake.

A lunchtime visit to the Toodyay Miniature Railway, where several poems on a railway theme were recited, was followed by a ride on the train.

Competition in the junior and novice sections on the Friday afternoon was followed by yarnspinning, which resulted in a clean sweep to WA with Peg Vickers prevailing over Peter Blyth and Keith Lethbridge.

Pat Drummond proved very popular with his concert on the Friday night.

He is descended from one of Toodyay's founders, Sir James Drummond, and was in Toodyay to check out his ancestral roots.

Saturday competition was in the traditional and modern poetry categories and MC for the whole weekend was Eric Biddle.

Those who still had energy on Saturday night enjoyed a bush dance put on by the highly acclaimed Perth band Loaded Dog.

The early start on Sunday morning for the Lions Club Bush Poets Breakfast was followed by the poets' brawl. This popular event was won by Peg Vickers from Albany, WA.

Competition resumed with poets performing items they had written themselves, both serious and humorous.

Winner of both these sections was a poet competing for the first time – James Fitzpatrick, a Perth paediatrician.

The festival would not have been possible without the generous support of the Toodyay and Districts Bendigo Community Bank, Op-shop, Makit Hardware, Toodyay Riverside Caravan Park and Toodyay Miniature Railway.

State Government support came from our major sponsors Healthway and Lotterywest.

Full results of the competitions can be found on the website at abpa.org.au/events/results.



Maurice Green and Eileen Green (no relation), on song and in harmony.

Blue Angel Bruce's brush with water fame

Greg Warburton

WHEN Nunile farmer, Davina Twine saw a painting of Bruce Cleasby and his truck on display at the Toodyay Agricultural Show art section she made an offer to purchase it.

Davina wanted to give the painting to Bruce himself.

So, after work on a Wednesday in November, alongside the now-retired truck featured in the painting, a very appreciative Bruce was presented with the newly framed picture.

Bruce also used the occasion to extol his encyclopaedic knowledge of the various trucks he has owned and driven over the decades.

There would be very few Toodyay residents who aren't familiar with the distinctive blue Leyland with matching water tank regularly seen for many years chugging along Toodyay Road and throughout surrounding districts.

With Bruce always dressed in blue, including an ever-present towelling hat and his quick response to supply fire fighters with water he earned the title Blue Angel.

This was the name of a sculpture of the truck by Margot Watkins exhibited several years previously.

Bruce is showing no sign of retiring as he



Davina Twine presents Bruce Cleasby with Greg Warburton's painting True Toodyay Blue.

continues to provide a valuable transport service for Toodyay.

Although Bruce is now using a somewhat more modern truck he still has time to help out or just stop for a chat.

The artist, Greg Warburton called the painting *True Toodyay Blue* saying Bruce's steady pace and positive attitude is an inspirational reminder in these increasingly hurried times in which we live.

Quilters stitch up fun-filled year

Ragbag Quilting Group
Kerry Gregory

EIGHT Ragbag ladies attended the Avon Valley Friendship Day in Northam in early November and we all had a terrific day – great hospitality, wonderful show-and-tell, quilts on display, more shopping from the four shops and several of our ladies received lucky door prizes.

What a great year we've had. The Ragbag Quilting ladies have held their second successful quilt exhibition at the Fibre Festival, hosted a wonderful Friendship Day in September, and a number of ladies were prize winners at the Toodyay Agricultural Show.

The quilting projects this year included about six charity quilts and a vast array of very beautiful quilted items for all of us, our friends and families.

Our group will be in recess now until the first Wednesday in February 2018.

We would like to take this opportunity to say that Christmas is a time to think of what we value most, special people, families, friends and our community.

Our season's greetings are extended to all. In the new year the Ragbag Quilting Group will meet in the St Stephen's Anglican Church Hall on the first and third Wednesday each month from 10am to 2pm.

Come and join us for a cuppa. New members are most welcome.

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Trench truce embodies spirit of peace

Toodyay Historical Society
Robyn Taylor, President

CHRISTMAS is upon us. A time to reflect on the good and miraculous things that can happen when the world seems full of doom and gloom.

Take, for example, the poignant Christmas in the trenches story from World War 1 that has caught public imagination over the last century.

While some of the facts are a bit hazy and the story may have been embellished over time, there are a number of diary entries and published stories that tell how on Christmas Eve 1914, German and British troops decided to hold a truce along sections of the Western Front.

Private Graham Williams of the 5th Battalion, London Rifle Brigade, wrote:

"First the Germans would sing one of their carols and then we would sing one of ours, until we started up *O Come, All Ye Faithful* and the Germans immediately joined in singing *Adeste Fideles* – the same hymn but with Latin words.

"I thought, well, this is really a most extraordinary thing – two nations both singing the same carol in the middle of a war." (*Christmas Truce* by Peter Gifford, in *Australian-Irish Association Journal*, Christmas edition.)

After some initial distrust of each other, the Germans held up "You no shoot, we no shoot" signs and the troops met in no-man's land to celebrate Christmas together, singing carols and exchanging gifts such as tobacco, beer and small personal items.

Their officers weren't thrilled at this strange turn of events but the soldiers on both sides had had enough, they wanted a break and so took matters into their own hands.

Besides, it was a special time when differences should be put aside.

Late November and with Christmas



Members enjoying the society's end-of-year Christmas party in the former Wicklow Shearing Shed in Clinton Street. Photo: Linda Rooney.

approaching, we celebrated the end of another eventful year in the shire's Wicklow Shearing Shed in Clinton Street.

This was our third year in the shed and each year gets better as the shire upgrades this fantastic public facility.

We had a good crowd for our bring-and-share event and everyone received a present from Santa.

This year we decided to do something special for the Christmas Street Party and decorated the former living room of what had been the Bank Manager's residence, next door to Bendigo Community Bank.

We wish the staff at the *Herald* a happy festive season and a big thank you for publishing our monthly columns.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday January 17 at 7pm in Drummond House,

Toodyay Environmental and History Centre.

A planning meeting for our 2018 program will be held on Sunday February 4 at 2pm in Drummond House.

For information contact: Linda Rooney, secretary.2j.ths@gmail.com; president Robyn Taylor, rdtaylor@iinet.net.au, 9574 2578, or Beth Frayne, 9574 5971 or email toobide4@iinet.net.au.

Donegan's Cottage (in the showgrounds) is open every Thursday from 1-3pm. Postal address: PO Box 32, Toodyay WA 6566.

There are also displays of books and other items at Drummond House. Open on Saturday mornings.

You can find us on our website: toodyayhistoricalsociety.org.au/.

Membership is great value at \$10 per annum.

New bench commemorates Woodturners' valued member

Avon Woodturners
Max J Heath

ON OCTOBER 29 we had about 36 people turn up for the official opening of our new Woodturners 2J Junction shed.

It was pleasing to see so many members of the WA Woodturners Association (WAWA) attend.

The members of the WAWA committee were thrilled to see our premises and mentioned in passing how envious they are.

We would like to thank our new Shire President for attending so soon after taking on the position.

Thanks also go to Margaret and Eugene O'Sullivan for representing the Toodyay and Districts Bendigo Community Bank. It was a great day.

Our convenor, David Doye, welcomed everyone and then our own WAWA life member David Eyres did the honours and declared the building open.

With funds donated by people who attended the funeral of our esteemed late member, Roger Streatfield, we purchased a bench and Andrew McCann unveiled a plaque in Roger's memory.

Some of Roger's family were present for the unveiling, including Linda's sister and husband from England.

We are so lucky to have premises such as we have and our sincere thanks to Lotteries West for their support.

After the opening, it was all hands to the wheel to finish off the raffle prizes. The raffle proved very successful, raising \$708.

We would like to congratulate the winners: first prize to Janet Michael; second prize to a gentleman from Fremantle; third to Danni Grundy and, fourth Rae Vigar.

The Avon Woodturners would like to thank all who supported us over the two days.

We now may have time to get about some turning of Christmas presents, etc.

That is about all from Woodturners for 2017 and so we would like to wish one and all a very Merry Christmas and at this special time of the year, please remember: Don't drive tired.

Junior engine driver tries to slot into place

Toodyay Miniature Railway
June Eastwood

USUALLY, it's the mini rail who supply the entertainment for the public but occasionally it is us who are entertained by a passenger.

A small boy strode purposefully down the platform to where Percy and his rake of carriages were standing idle.

He confidently stepped into Percy's driving seat and with a great flourish produced a dollar coin.

However, his hand remained suspended in mid-air and his beaming countenance transformed to a puzzled frown.

Finally came the plaintive wail: "Where's the slot for the coin?"

Needless to say, a slightly disappointed small person had to vacate to the wagon behind so Micaile and Benny could take him for a spin round the track.

The Woolooloo boys attended their last work session for the year, finishing a wide paved ramp up past Miss Tricia and a narrower pram ramp to one side.

As befitting an early 1900's railway station, iron lace has been added and the pickets are now all sporting a fresh coat of cream paint.

Already the boys have plans to return in autumn when they will smarten up the tunnel

exterior and try their hand at a cave home for a new resident bunyip who will be moving in around January or February.

We had a flying visit in late November from *Shandy* author Joan Thomas and husband Gordon who motored to WA from the ACT to visit their first great-grandchild in Geraldton.

Joan has created a cute line of postcards featuring scenes taken from the book and has gifted us some to display.

Our operating season has now concluded, though we usually run an Australia Day morning program.

Thank you to the *Herald* for printing our news and best wishes to all.

Sandakan winner to be picked

RSL Toodyay Sub Branch
Bruce Guthrie

AT the RSL Toodyay Sub Branch we have had an amazing year of commemoration, community service, membership and community support and we concluded 2017 with our special Christmas luncheon

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on Sunday December 3 at the Memorial Hall.

At the council chambers on November 10 interviews were conducted by a panel for the 2018 Sandakan Scholarship Tour.

This year we received five applications and after one withdrew, four local students were interviewed.

I am told all interviews were of a very high standard. Well done applicants.

The two scholarship winners will be announced on Monday December 11 at school end-of-year functions.

RSL continues to work with our shire council towards leasing the Old Gardeners Shed in Clinton Street as the new home for the sub branch.

On Sunday December 17 a busy bee will be held at the shed at 10am to undertake preliminary clean-up of the site and inside.

This will be followed by a barbecue at 2pm.

Members please come along and be involved in the day. Please RSVP for the barbecue to Bob 9574 5473.

The sub branch wishes to thank the Toodyay Car and Motor Cycle Club for generously donating some of their proceeds from their recent activity to RSL. This will help us continue with community work projects.

We will be assisting an invalid member financially towards replacing his fridge and lost food.

Our president Peter and all members of RSL Toodyay Sub Branch wish our community a safe, healthy and happy Christmas and New Year 2018.

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