



President: Alan Jackson **0835248724**

Secretary: Rob Murphy **0837267060**

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Editorial Board: Barry Cleveland, Lina Howard,
Hugh Maunder, Keela van Niekerk

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Rotary's March Focus is Literacy

Editorial

ON THE ROAD TO 70 ...

by Bev Bird

This year I will be celebrating a birthday that ends in a zero. I will soon be joining the hallowed ranks of those members of society known as 'septuagenarians'. It sounds like they're followers of some arcane religious sect but actually it's just a grandiose name for old folks.

At least during my sixties, in an age-group with a name starting with 'sex-', I could hold out the faint, if unrealistic, hope that some wildly romantic times might still lie ahead. Entering a decade labelled as 'sept-' hardly fills one with fervour and giddy enthusiasm.

Birthdays that end in a zero are supposed to usher in a period of thoughtful introspection and self-assessment. You're supposed to look back over your life and ask yourself if you could have done some things differently. Well, I haven't worked up much enthusiasm to do any of that just yet, but what I have managed to do is to garner an assortment of fairly arbitrary life-lessons, gathered over the years. So here, then, are some things I've learned along the way:

- Kids are the greatest gifts in life. Also the most costly and troublesome. They never go away, not even once they've passed the age you were when you first began to worry about your choice of pension fund. But what would life be without them?

- Dreams are sometimes better than reality, even if some of them really do happen to come true. Dream holidays can still sometimes entail lost luggage; dream houses can still have faulty plumbing; dream lovers can still break your heart - just ask Jennifer Aniston or Angelina Jolie. That said, I would nevertheless like to make it quite clear to Brad Pitt, in case

he's reading this, that he's more than welcome to come by my house at any time if he's feeling at all sad or lonely.

- Some of life's setbacks that seem so disastrous at the time turn out to have been blessings. I've had to remind myself of that quite often over the years.

- As you get older you are less concerned about what people think of you. In an extreme case that would include people accidentally catching sight of me naked. For the past fifty or so years I would've considered that my problem. Now it's theirs.

- You learn to have more empathy and grace as you grow older. Except for Donald Trump.

- You feel no different at 70 than you did at 40 or 30 or maybe even 20, because essentially you are no different. You're the same person, just with - somehow or other - a less flattering profile and more body skin than before. When you're 20 you imagine all those ancient and decrepit people of 50 or 60 or (horrors!) 70 must be living eternally miserable lives, forever consumed with hopeless longing for the bright, carefree days of their far-off youth. Truth be told, us ancient folks tend to lead pretty cheery and fulfilling lives and to feel quite happy and breezy as yet another year rolls by, as we raise our freshly charged wineglasses to the setting sun.

- Older people are not as incompetent as younger people think they are. Older folk tend to do things at a slower pace mostly because they have hopeless eyesight and lousy hearing, that's all.

- Wrinkles are not what make you look old. Despite what the beauty industry with its relentless marketing would have us believe, wrinkles are not what age you the most, physically. What ages you the most is primarily your body shape (just compare Queen Elizabeth with her great, great grandmother, Queen Victoria), followed by your hairstyle (including beards!), and then your style of dress. Wrinkles are hardly worth mentioning - they're just laugh-lines, after all. As long as no-one ever says of your laugh-lines what they say of Mick Jagger's: 'Surely nothing could possibly be that funny'.

- As you grow older you fiercely value your old friends - those friends who've been around with you forever, the guys with whom you've shared the good times and the bad, the triumphs and the tragedies, the wild joys and the broken hearts. They are more precious than gold.

- After the first 30 or 40 years of marriage you develop a level of tolerance and forbearance that is almost saintly in its magnitude and beauty. God should reward us for that, at some stage in our diminishing time left on earth.

Those are my inspired thoughts and musings after sixty-nine years of life thus far. Let's see what glorious pearls of wisdom I will have to impart - and will hopefully still manage to remember - once I've completed the next exciting decade.

	Minutes from 9 March: Compiled by Keela van Niekerk
Attendance	15 members present
Visitors	Phil and Stephanie
Fellowship Announcements	Stephen B thanked the club for his Get Well Soon card. Candice's Wedding Anniversary on 15 March
From the President	Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Monique for an amusing editorial last week. Still a worry regarding late or no apologies for meetings and meal planning ELRU has been accepted as a prospective beneficiary by the Board and will be discussed with the club at the next meeting.
Slots	<p>David: (1) Potential weekend away in May to a farm house in Robertson has been cancelled. New proposal is to go in August and everyone books their own accommodation. (2) David will be going to Kenton for "grunter hunting" and celebrating his Dad's 88th Birthday. (3) Past member Tony Smith has passed away, aged 82.</p> <p>Karen: Thanked Rob for sending out the contact sheet and reminded members to make sure it is up to date.</p> <p>Barry: Recent problems with members not receiving the Wynpress, hopefully sorted.</p> <p>String: (1) Social on 30 March – Gin Tasting – has been moved to Wednesday the 29th – 8 members showed interest, please contact Jackie if you are interested in joining. (2) Spoke about Cycle Tour Marshalling plans</p> <p>Alan: (1) Board proposes that we have a Business Meeting once every two months. Aubrey asked that we are sent the Board Minutes. This has been raised before and Rob to send. Agreed to pilot this and re-evaluate at another stage. If something needs to be voted for or discussed, President to email the club before the meeting to advise members of it, so that there is no delay in waiting for the next Business Meeting. (2) Phillippi visit next week – all to bring something to eat that can be shared and your own drinks. Meet at Kelvin Grove at 6pm.</p>
Guest Speaker	Bruce gave a very thought provoking talk on "Antibiotics and Rubbish" and how antibiotics resistance has grown over the last 20 years.
Swindle	Alan's name was drawn but unfortunately did not choose the right card, Karen won the R15 attendance prize.
President's Song	Without even finishing the quote, George Michael's song "Wake me up".

Duty Roster				
	March			April
	16	23	30	6 Business
Sergeant	Away	Todd	SOCIAL	Barnard
Wynpress Editorial	Project PEDI	Dessington	Moved to	Gowdy
Wynpress Minutes	in Philippi	Van Niekerk	Wednesday	Cleveland
Door Duty		Lidgley	29 March	Munday
Grace		Dessington		Danckwerts
Loyal Toast		Overbosch	Gin	Schonegevel
International Toast		Hovstad	Tasting	Lidgley
Speaker Intro		Schoenegevel		N/A
Speaker Thanks		Overbosch		N/A
Find Speakers				Cleveland, Dietrich, Munday, Murphy, Schonegevel

Dates To Diarise	
Thur 16 Mar	Visit to Rotary Project PEDI in Philippi – AG Paul Stohrer
Thur 23 Mar	Peninsula Schools Feeding Association – Charles Gray
Wed 29 Mar	Social Moved to Wednesday 29 March (Gin Tasting)
Sun 9 Apr	Rotary Family Fun Centennial Walk – 2.65Km at Mouille Point Rotary Family Fun Day at Blue Train Park
22 + 23 Apr	Last Night of the Proms in the City Hall
27-29 Apr	Rotary District Conference in Swellendam

Hugh's Nughs

Indonesia - Komodo

The Island has a surface area of 390 square kilometers and is particularly notable as the habitat of the Komodo Dragon, the largest lizard on earth.

The early stories about a dragon, which spat fire, existing on this island were widely believed. It was not until the early 1910s that the island was visited and a "dragon" was captured and found to be a giant Monitor Lizard.

There are only about 4000 Komodo Dragons living in the wild but of great concern is that there are only 350 breeding females. They lay their eggs in huge nests and the mother stays in the area for 3 months and then deserts them. The eggs hatch 6 months later and the 1 inch little lizards make a dash for the trees to climb up to safety before the mother or some other dragon comes to eat them. The Komodo Dragons are cannibals and happily feed on young Komodo Dragons up to the age of 4 years. Until they are 4 years old they find homes in holes in trees away from the adults, who are too large to climb trees.

Komodo Dragons can live up to 55 years and can weigh up to 300lb (136kg) and grow to 10 feet (3m) in length. They live on wild pigs, the local deer, and anything else that comes their way. They can run at up to 18k/h and are thus able to ambush their prey which they swallow whole.

We were led through the forest by a Naturalist Guide with a forked stick to keep us safe from angry dragons. The stick was not necessary as the dragons were rather sleepy.

Australia - Cairns

Cairns only has two seasons – Wet season (monsoon) from November to May and Dry season from June to October. The annual rainfall can be over 4000 mm (160in). It was founded in 1876 and growth was hastened by the need to export gold discovered on the tablelands to the west. The land on the lowlands was found to be ideal for agriculture (sugar cane, corn, rice bananas and pineapples).

With the tropical forests and the Great Barrier Reef in close proximity, Cairns attracts many tourists.

The top of a casino has the spectacular **Cairns Rainforest Dome** which is a wild life exhibit, enclosed by a 20m high glass dome with parrots, cockatoos and doves. There is a **Skyrail Rainforest Cableway** which is a five mile route just metres above the canopy in cars that offer 360 degree views.

We attended an **Aboriginal Evening**. In a theatre, Aboriginal performers took us on a journey into the legends of Australia's Dreamtime. Later, there was an Aboriginal spirit performance and a traditional fire making ceremony (rubbing two sticks together) at which they created a spectacular 12m fireball.



Wynberg Rotary meet every Thursday, 6 for 6.30pm, The Palms House.
 For more information about our club, like us on Facebook or visit our website;
Wynbergrotary.org.za