

YOUR SAY

Family matters

Eve
FISHER



THERE is much talk about the inevitable relationship breakdowns that have happened during these intense times, but perhaps it's also important to look at those connections that have blossomed.

Just this weekend I caught up with a gorgeous friend who is smack in the middle of those glorious early days of a relationship where the first flushes of love are still making their way into his heart and mind.

They dated slowly and mindfully. For six weeks during lockdown they met once a week and walked and talked. For hours at a time. Observing social distancing, of course.

By the time they had their first dinner date they'd done nearly an entire day of straight conversation. A few weeks on from that and they're already getting ready to meet each other's children.

There is a lot to be said about taking time together. Really taking time. Lockdown forced people to talk, whether they liked it or not. Cohabiting relationships — marriages or otherwise — were the first to feel the pressure. All of a sudden people who would usually avoid each other (deliberately?) through work, hobbies and socialising were made to stare at the same four

walls with each other. Every day.

Cracks started to appear almost immediately. People who had been maintaining relationships while living completely separate lives came to realise they had nothing in common any more. Or simply didn't like each other. Once the veil of busy-ness was lifted some people weren't happy with what they saw. Cue a surge in breakups. And, tragically, domestic violence.

On the flip side, isolation gave new relationships a chance to grow and solid partnerships the opportunity to reconnect. I'm lucky enough to have a partner I wanted to isolate with. We've essentially been hunkered down since we met

so it wasn't a great impost. It was actually a struggle to get back into socialising.

None of us can yet tell yet exactly how lockdown will have shaped our future relationships, but I like to think that the strong ones will not only survive but thrive. If a marriage stars characters who can't bear to spend time together, then is it a marriage at all? It's not normal that people who love each other should be apart for much of their lives and then be unhappy when forced together.

Being busy is not a solution for dealing with your not-so-better half, yet it happens all the time.

When it comes to connecting,

families often bury themselves in their gadgets and can go days or even weeks without a proper conversation. It's worth thinking about times gone by — before electricity — where families would sit around together each evening at the home-stead engaging with one another. Being interested in one another. We all disappear into our gadgets now, sitting in the same room or bed, yet more apart than we've ever been.

Lockdown provided a massive lesson in loneliness for those friends and neighbours who did spend isolation ... well, in isolation. It made me realise how much they surely missed hugs and chitchat. It made me realise how grateful I am to have my beloved close by.

I've never been worried about being alone until I witnessed how real the struggle was for some. It made me appreciate how most of us really don't want to be alone. Lockdown didn't cater for single folk, so I know I have a skewed view of what it was like. And I'm not saying all the singles had a rough time; I know my mate who found love would argue it was the perfect slow start a relationship like theirs needed.

As the threat of lockdown looms once again, it's time to take stock and assess those relationships that mean the most to us. And cut the cord of partnerships that are doing us damage. Foster genuine friendships and understand what you really want. All the social media friends in the world are nothing compared to a real hug, in real life.



Geelong
Advertiser
EDITORIAL

Increase in local tests is for the best

IT was encouraging to hear Barwon Health report yesterday about the increasing number of residents from the Geelong region volunteering for COVID-19 tests.

In little more than a week 3000 people have fronted at testing centres for the uncomfortable but necessary procedure.

That's about 66 per cent more than were coming in during the previous weeks.

So far, the increased testing has yet to lead to more positive cases in Geelong, where there is presently one active case on the public record. But the worrying increase of positive tests in Victoria has presumably inspired some of the Geelong people to be tested.

Last week public debate was starting about the possibility of Geelong and other regional centres with low numbers of positive cases being allowed to relax their public restrictions sooner than suburban Melbourne. But yesterday that discussion shifted when the worst-hit suburbs were plunged into forced lockdown.

This is the last thing anyone wants to happen in Geelong. The aim, for now, is continued but careful relaxation of restrictions. With every person who takes the test, the chances of achieving this aim improve.

ADDY READERS HAVE THEIR SAY - LETTERS AND TEXTS

NORTH'S UNEMPLOYMENT WOES STILL UNADDRESSED

INTERESTING the headlines are all doom and gloom over an unemployment number reaching 7-8 per cent in Geelong (and rightly so) but the northern suburbs have had 15+ per cent for decades, not days, with nothing strategic to offer for the future.

We need a concept that generates 20,000 jobs, not 65-100.

Perhaps longtime serving MPs can discuss over lunch.

Greg Dennis

VALE TO A STALWART OF THE LOCAL THEATRE SCENE

NORMA Cant (nee Higgins) was born in Geelong and very quickly became involved in the local arts scene.

Norma joined the Geelong Musical Comedy Company in 1955 and appeared in the musicals *The Desert Song* and *Going Up*. She very quickly progressed to principal roles in shows including *The Chocolate Soldier*, *Little Nellie Kelly*, *The Lilac Domino*, *Wild Violets* and *Pink Champagne*. While raising her family with husband Mi-

chael, she appeared in other shows including *Oklahoma*, *The Dancing Years*, *South Pacific*, *Naughty Marietta* and her favourite role of all, Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*.

In 1973 Norma and her husband Michael joined the Gay Nineties Theatre Restaurant and performed in 700 shows over eight years.

In the '80s it was back to theatre and many memorable performances in shows such as *Brigadoon*, *Hello Dolly*, *Annie* and, in 1989, her final appearance in Geelong as Mama Morton in *Chicago*.

Norma spent many years working behind the scenes as assistant director to her husband Michael on such classics as *The Music Man*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Anything Goes*.

In 1994 Norma and Michael re-



Norma Cant as Miss Hannigan in *Annie*.

tired to Buderim in Queensland where they both became very active in the local community.

In recent years Norma has been living in Tasmania, in order to be closer to her son Barry. She passed away peacefully, on Sunday, June 28.

Peter Wills

GEELONG COUNCIL IGNORING PEDESTRIAN CRIES FOR HELP

I HAVE already been made painfully aware of the attitude of the City of Greater Geelong to the lack of provision of safe pedestrian access in Central Rd south, Drysdale.

The residents of Bellarine Springs Retirement Village and hundreds of supporters presented a petition on the subject to council in July 2019. Since then there has been no sign of action from council to redress the issue, despite six 'near miss' reports, each of which could have had fatal consequences.

Undeterred, I now turn my attention to the existing footpath alongside the Geelong hospital in Bellerine St. Recently, having parked in the one

remaining disabled parking spot at the bottom of the hill, I proceeded (at 79), with walking stick, to negotiate the very uneven surface of the footpath to the single hospital entrance at the top of the hill.

It must have been obvious that I was having difficulty as two caring people stopped to ask if I needed help. Surely if there is one place to provide safe access for pedestrians it is outside the main public hospital of a major city? Over to you, CoGG.

Judy Baird,
Drysdale

INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE MUST BE PROTECTED

IT'S more important than ever that Australia has independent media covering TV and radio news across the country.

During the recent mega fires the ABC coverage stood out as genuinely representing what was happening in local areas far better than the commercial networks.

Jenny Hurley,
Highton

**ADDY
ONLINE
POLL**

Yesterday's question:

Should Geelong council extend the city's 30-minute free parking in central Geelong to November 30?

YES 91.5% NO 8.5%

Register your vote at geelongadvertiser.com.au

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POST: PO BOX 91, GEELONG 3220 or
yoursay@geelongadvertiser.com.au

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