



Schedule of Services

Services are held every Sunday at 10:30 at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre

4 February, Martin Horlacher: "Enlightenment: Dehellenisation Versus Reason and Rationality"

If the modern Western world owes how far it has come to any one particular historical and cultural tradition, it is that of the Hellenistic civilisation of Ancient Greece. Arguably, it is this tradition that served as the basis for everything that is good in our world today, more than two millennia later. And yet, today, this worldview is under attack - both in the West and in the East - and our world, along with all human civilisation's achievements, is in danger.

11 February, No meeting

18 February, Rev. Rex Hunt: "Desert, Spinifex, and Lent for Unitarians"

Remembering we too are desert flowers.

25 February, Carolyn Donnelly: "The significance, explanation, and philosophical background of Charles Schultz's loved Peanuts comic strips"

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### THE CORPORATE DANCE

The corporate raider and the commodities trader

Were strolling in the breeze

They wept like anything to see

Such quantities of trees

"If this were all clear felled," they said

"Such profits we could seize"

"If bulldozers and front end loaders

And chainsaws we could find

Do you suppose," the trader said,

"That anyone would mind?"

"We could talk to them," the raider said

"Seek agreement...of a kind"

**"We'll get some lawyers that's the go"  
And they came thick and fast  
In old school ties and business suits  
Each slicker than the last  
"We need some help the raider said  
To get a contract passed"**

**"Traditional owners walk with us"  
The lawyers did beseech,  
"We'll talk about the issues  
And consensus we will reach  
Then in the global market place  
We'll help you find your niche."**

**"We'll show you all the documents  
And you can gaze upon  
The neatly printed legaleze  
And all the pros and cons.  
We'll then concede some cash you'll need  
When the forest has all gone"**

**"We can't eat money," the elders cried,  
"Or feed it to our young  
We cannot plant it watch it grow  
And flourish in the sun."  
"We can help you there," the trader said  
"With jobs for everyone"**

**And as he spoke this trader slick  
A laptop did produce,  
"We'll give you one of these," he said  
For each hectare we reduce"  
"What good is that," the elders cried,  
But the young ones were seduced**

**"As well as that," the raider said  
"You need local industry,  
We'll lend you money so you can plant  
Roses for every tree.  
Current interest rates are good  
So returns are guaranteed."**

**The corporate raider and the commodities  
trader  
Were sweltering in the sun  
"I need some shade," the trader cried  
But cover there was none  
Nor was there coolness under trees  
They'd cut down every one.**

**"The traditional owners they will help  
With water and a snack  
We'll shelter for a time  
In a forest dweller's shack  
We'll be refreshed and in while**

**We'll be back on track"  
The forest dweller's huts weren't there  
The owners had all vanished  
They forgot, these corporate giants,  
That the people had been banished.  
"Let's hope they hurry back," they said  
"We're absolutely famished."**

**\* \* \* \***

**The forest dwellers did not return  
To the cities they'd adjourned.  
They'd traded lives of simple use  
For drug and alcohol abuse.  
The CEO's forgot you see  
That forest dwellers need the trees,  
A simple error you'll agree.  
They weren't to know, how could they tell  
That forest dwellers cannot dwell  
In a forest once it's felled.**

*Jan Lovell*

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Photos Wikipedia

The Mystery that was Jackson Pollock

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Let's begin with a letter from his father:

Dear Son Jack,

Well it has been some time since I received your fine letter. It makes me a bit proud and swelled up to get letters from five young fellows by the names of Charles, Mart, Frank, Sande, and Jack. The letters are so full of life, interest, ambition, and good fellowship. It fills my old heart with gladness and makes me feel 'Bully.' Well Jack I was glad to learn how you felt about your summer's work & your coming school year. The secret of success is concentrating interest in life, interest in sports and good times, interest in your studies, interest in your fellow students, interest in the small things of nature, insects, birds, flowers, leaves, etc. In other words to be fully awake to everything about you & the more you learn the more you can appreciate & get a full measure of joy & happiness out of life. I do not think a young fellow should be too serious, he should be full of the Dickens some times to create a balance.

I think your philosophy on religion is okay. I think every person should think, act & believe according to the dictates of his own conscience without too much pressure from the outside. I too think there is a higher power, a supreme force, a governor, a something that controls the universe. What it is & in what form I do not know. It may be that our intellect or spirit exists in space in some other form after it parts from this body. Nothing is impossible and we know that nothing is destroyed, it only changes chemically. We burn up a house and its contents, we change the form but the same elements exist; gas, vapor, ashes. They are all there just the same.

I had a couple of letters from mother the other day, one written the twelfth and one the fifteenth. Am always glad to get letters from your mother, she is a Dear isn't she? Your mother and I have been a complete failure financially but if the boys turn out to be good and useful citizens nothing else matters and we know this is happening so why not be ju-

bilant?

The weather up here couldn't be beat, but I suppose it won't last always, in fact we are looking forward to some snowstorms and an excuse to come back to the orange belt. I do not know anything about what I will do or if I will have a job when I leave here, but I am not worrying about it because it is no use to worry about what you can't help, or what you can help, moral 'don't worry.'

Write and tell me all about your schoolwork and yourself in general. I will appreciate your confidence.

You no doubt had some hard days on your job at Crestline this summer. I can imagine the steep climbing, the hot weather, etc. But those hard things are what builds character and physic. Well Jack I presume by the time you have read all this you will be mentally fatigued and will need to relax. So goodnight, pleasant dreams and God bless you.

Your affectionate Dad

(From Lapham's Quarterly)

Sounds like inspiring evidence of the importance of family affection, doesn't it? Perhaps it is. And yet Jackson Pollock's dad has been described as an abusive man when he was actually part of the family. He was an alcoholic and his youngest son, who became known as Jackson Pollock, followed his footsteps in that.

Here are some short extracts from a well known biography site, plus additions, which hopefully will form a narrative :

Paul Jackson Pollock was born on January 28, 1912 in Cody, Wyoming. His father, LeRoy Pollock, was a farmer and a government land surveyor, and his mother, Stella May McClure, was a fierce woman with artistic ambitions. The youngest of five brothers, he was a needy child and was often in search of attention that he did not receive.

During his youth, Pollock's family moved around the West, to Arizona and throughout California. When Pollock was 8, his father,

who was an abusive alcoholic, left the family, and Pollock's older brother, Charles, became like a father to him.

(He followed Charles into the art world becoming at first a representational painter.)

During the Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt started a program called the Public Works of Art Project, one of many intended to jumpstart the economy. Pollock and his brother Sanford, known as Sande, both found work with PWA's mural division.

But despite being busy with work, Pollock could not stop drinking. In 1937, he began receiving psychiatric treatment for alcoholism from a Jungian analyst who fuelled his interest in symbolism and Native American art. In 1939, Pollock discovered Pablo Picasso's show at the Museum of Modern Art. Picasso's artistic experimentation encouraged Pollock to push the boundaries of his own work.

(He met and married Lee Krasner, an established painter in her own right, and was "adopted" by wealthy Peggy Guggenheim, the supreme patron of modern art. During this period Pollock developed his drip technique, pouring paint and other media directly onto canvases.)

"Abstract painting is abstract. It confronts you. There was a reviewer a while back who wrote that my pictures didn't have any beginning or any end. He didn't mean it as a compliment, but it was."

—Jackson Pollock

Pollock's most famous paintings were made during this "drip period" between 1947 and 1950. He became wildly popular after being featured in a four-page spread, on August 8, 1949, in Life magazine. The article asked of Pollock, "Is he the greatest living painter in the United States?" The Life article changed Pollock's life overnight. Many other artists resented his fame, and some of his friends suddenly became competitors. As his fame grew, some critics began calling Pollock a fraud, causing even him to question his own work. During this time he would often look to Krasner to determine which paintings were

good, unable to make the differentiation himself.

In 1949, Pollock's show at the Betty Parsons Gallery sold out, and he suddenly became the best-paid avant-garde painter in America. But fame was not good for Pollock, who, as a result of it, became dismissive of other artists, even his former teacher and mentor, Thomas Hart Benton. Furthermore, acts of self-promotion made him feel like a phony, and he would sometimes give interviews in which his answers were scripted. When Hans Namuth, a documentary photographer, began producing a film of Pollock working, Pollock found it impossible to "perform" for the camera. Instead, he went back to drinking heavily.

By 1956, he had quit painting, and his marriage was in shambles. Krasner reluctantly left for Paris to give Pollock space.

He died after driving drunk and crashing into a tree in New York in 1956, at age 44.

Krasner returned from France to bury Pollock, and subsequently went into a mourning that would last the rest of her life. Retaining her creativity and productivity, Krasner lived and painted for another 20 years. She also managed the sale of Pollock's paintings, carefully distributing them to museums. Before her death, Krasner set up the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, which gives grants to young, promising artists. When Krasner died on June 19, 1984, the estate was worth \$20 million.

Read the full article:

<https://www.biography.com/people/jackson-pollock-9443818>

In Australia Pollock is known mainly for the controversial painting "Blue Poles" purchased in the Whitlam era.

Extracts from exhibition notes from the National Gallery of Australia tell us:

Within the life and work of this extraordinary artist, the National Gallery of Australia's Blue Poles: Number 11, 1952, occupies a special place. Pollock's last monumental abstract painting, Blue Poles is the final instalment in

a series of works which have changed the course of modern art. The controversy, however, that followed the work's purchase for 1.3 million Australian dollars – a record price at the time both here and in the United States – and the subsequent claims that the work began as a drunken collaboration between Pollock and other artists, have made it difficult to see the picture through the journalistic hype. The time is ripe for a re-evaluation of Blue Poles.

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In an interview he justified his unusual method of painting by saying that “The modern painter cannot express this age, the airplane, the atom bomb, the radio, in the old forms of the Renaissance or of any other past culture”¹ Pollock felt that his painting technique reflected not only the ‘inner world’ of the unconscious but also the cultural experience of the time he was living in. Unexpectedly, to express these things, he felt compelled to move away from figurative art. As he remarked in 1949: “I try to stay away from any recognisable image; if it creeps in, I try to do away with it . . . to let the painting come through. I don't let the image carry the painting . . . It's extra cargo and unnecessary.”

Pollock signalled through his liberated use of materials that he was free of constraints on his own individuality, artistic or societal. He was liberated to the extent of not entirely planning in advance what he was going to do.....

Read more.

<https://nga.gov.au/Pollock/index.cfm>

(So the National Gallery has no doubts as to the artistic and cultural value of Jackson Pollock's work. Pollock himself, however, was haunted by the suspicion that he might be a phony - which may account for his brash assertiveness at times . He knew he was colloquially known as “Jack the Dripper”. It might be that suspecting oneself of fraud is quite common in people who have embraced a mystic path in religion, not to mention Pollock's Jungian world view. This self doubt is probably the best indication of his sincerity.)

Compiled by Jan Tendys, with inspiration from “BrainPickings”, M Popover.

Some Comic Relief

How does Moses make tea? Hebrews it.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

They told me I had type A blood, but it was a Typo.

I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.

I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.

This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.

When chemists die, they barium.

I'm reading a book about anti gravity. I just can't put it down.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

Did you hear about the cross eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

Broken pencils are pointless.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.

I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.

Velcro: what a rip off!

Contributed by Carolyn Donnelly.

Address by **Quentin Dempster** to the International Medicine in Addiction conference on March 25, 2017.

Wilful ignorance and the courage to explain

31 March 2017

The role of committed journalists, whether in a functioning democracy like Australia, or a country under a kleptocracy, totalitarian or politburo governance, is to tell the public what is really going on.

On June 5th 2013 the world's civilian populations became aware of the US National Security Agency's mass surveillance capability through telephony and internet service providers.

With a righteous imperative generated by 9/11 and an enveloping fear of random home grown acts of terror, security agencies had been insisting that they needed all available counter measures to keep us safe.

In breach of Congress' Patriot Act constraints, and assuredly in breach of the United Nations' convention of an individual's inviolate right to privacy, the NSA, with its Five Eyes partners (Australia, UK, New Zealand and Canada) had been establishing real time access to the mobile phones and computers of everyone accessing digital networks.

Since the invention of the computer-to-computer linked world wide web by programmer Tim Berners-Lee in 1989, the internet has transformed communications and is now fundamental to commerce, trade, industry, defence, government, education, health, sport, entertainment, individual, family and social engagement.

From 1990 a CSIRO data transmission invention called WLAN – wireless local area network, now known as wi fi – liberated the internet from fixed lines making web access even easier in buildings and on the street.

The digital revolution and the limitless storage capacity of cyberspace has, since 1989, ushered in 'the information age'.

It has many upsides in making vast knowledge

instantaneously available to anyone. It has many downsides through criminality, scams, money laundering, commercial and inter-governmental espionage (hacking) and the exploitation or intimidation (trolling) of the vulnerable, gullible and unwary.

By 2010 68 percent of the world's population was using digital mobile telephony with projections for almost universal coverage in the years to come including in the poorest of countries.

When NSA contractor Edward Joseph Snowden (b. 1983) went public in 2013 through the exposure facilitated by his selected journalists and supportive media outlets, he did us a great service.

He exposed NSA surveillance systems, in particular X-KEY-SCORE, where any analyst "could wire tap anyone, you, your accountant, a federal judge or even the president" if he or she had a personal email.

Accompanying Snowden's revelations came oft-used George Orwell warnings about a population controlled through the prosecution of a perpetual war, in the contemporary context, our perpetual war on terror.

"The problem with mass surveillance is that when you collect everything, you understand nothing," Snowden said. "Government spying on its citizens changes the balance of power between the citizen and the state." Edward Snowden is still facing charges under the US Espionage Act and, if convicted, could be imprisoned indefinitely.

Congress has to some extent corrected Patriot Act loopholes and now requires the NSA to establish more specific, demonstrable grounds to warrant domestic surveillance requiring invasion of privacy.

Such was the nationwide trauma suffered by the American people after the September 11 2001 aeroplane suicide attacks on the Pentagon and the twin towers in New York that terrorism was used to justify the whatever-it-takes practices in national security. Meeting in secret a special court established through the US Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act

pre-emptively warranted immediate access to meta data to help track persons of interest, leading, if suspicion warranted, to real time interception. At around the same time 'enhanced interrogation techniques' were deemed legal as was the use of drone warfare to eliminate targets approved, through a legally devised check-list, ultimately by the commander-in-chief.

In his recent movie "Snowden", film director Oliver Stone has Snowden's national security mentor, a man the script writers called, Corbin O'Brian (actually a character from Orwell's 1984) justify any illegal or unconstitutional conduct as the exceptional but excusable bastardry which must be applied by true patriots in warfare. But, the O'Brian character declared, terror was but a minor part, as was the "sand and oil" wars of Afghanistan and Iraq. The real battle was for military capability in emerging cyber warfare where countries could be economically disabled and entire systems could be crippled unless superiority could be achieved. Hence the investment of billions of taxpayers' dollars in cyber security and defensive encryption to protect the interests of the U.S. and its allies. Hence even greater investment in new offensive weapons systems for unmanned submarine, swarm drones, and robotic warfare to counter arms build-ups by China and Russia.

NSA contractor Edward Snowden courageously told the civilians of the world what was really happening.

Usually this sort of information is anonymously leaked to intelligence writers and journalists and can so easily be denied, put down as conspiracy theory, or simply ignored. Since 9/11 there has been a movement by legislators at the behest of security agencies to criminalise journalism.

But Snowden made the tactical decision to identify himself to the world through selected documentary and film makers, journalists and media outlets to establish the fact that he was acting alone and out of conscience.

In free speech jurisdictions social media is now playing an increasingly influential role in diversifying the way people are finding out

what is going on. The so called 'corporate media' and military strategists hate it because, I suppose, it empowers every user with a substantive story to tell. Corporate media and government with tendencies to information control can be got around, in an instant. But how long will this freedom last?

On September 29th 2015 Edward Snowden joined the social media platform Twitter and tweeted: "Can you hear me now?" Within 24 hours he had two million followers and from his flat in Moscow can reach the free speech world with 140 characters of pertinent facts, links and observations. Just how long the Snowden voice can be heard remains to be seen. He can be switched off at a moment's notice, particularly if Vladimir Putin takes offence at anything he posts.

In Australia the Snowden files contained embarrassing details of our Australian Signals Directorate tapping the mobile telephones of Indonesian president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, his wife and senior Indonesian government officials.

The publication of this material by the ABC and Guardian Australia was used by incoming Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, in part, to justify her 2014 decision to terminate the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Australia Network contract which resulted in the vandalising of Radio Australia and the withdrawal of in situ correspondents helping to engage Australia with the Asia Pacific region.

The Minister was supported in her decision through a campaign of vilification of the ABC by News Corporation, otherwise known as the Murdoch Press.

For me it made public support for public broadcasting, with all its admitted faults, all the more important for the civilians of Australia.....**Dempster then went on to talk about "the distorting influence of the Murdoch Press on political discourse in our country." From the John Menadue – Pearls and Irritations series of articles.**

<http://www.johnmenadue.com/quentin-dempster-wilful-ignorance-and-the-courage-to-explain/>

We don't talk much about our spiritual beliefs.

Our Fellowship used to encourage new members to tell us their spiritual journey in life .I remember one person saying she found hearing what other people believed the most interesting aspect of our activities. Perhaps we should do more of telling each other our credos? I'll take a lead:

Credo

People seem to assume that the number one question in defining yourself is whether or not you believe in God. I am an agnostic on that one at a purely intellectual level. On an emotional, intuitive level I believe the universe has some sort of spiritual quality to it, although I cannot explain what I mean by "spiritual" other than to point to certain art works or certain music

I have invented a Personification of the spiritual quality of the Universe. I call it variously God or Spirit of Life or whatever. I commune with my Personification and it doesn't bother me that it is a sort of imaginary friend because I do think it relates **somehow** to something real. The main reward I get is a sense of being acceptable. My spirit has been rather bruised over the years and so it means something to me that my Personification finds me acceptable. :-)

As to eternal life, another worry of most religious people, my attitude is sceptical I think it is wishful thinking. But then, the more I read of how physicists and mathematicians view the universe, the more I feel humble about having any point of view about life after death. The scientific universe is so strange, anything at all could be the case. I'm not going to fret about it however.

A lot of us worry too much about being consistent and expunging all traces of theism. If we can't reach Reality, we have to make do with metaphor, poetry, hypothesis. We don't have to be right.

Jan Tendys (who doesn't think spiritual beliefs should be our number one concern in defining ourselves; of greater importance is our total view of ourselves in this world, hopefully as people able to love and receive love, to be responsible to family, friends and society and to know and defend basic Human Rights - i.e. our shared humanism.)

Would you care to join Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship?

Membership is open to all adults and includes this newsletter. Full membership \$50 concession \$20 . Please note that all membership applications are subject to approval at a meeting of the Committee. Ask Rev. Geoff Usher for an application form at the Sunday service.

If you have a news item or written article you believe would be of interest to the congregation, we invite you to submit it for Esprit.

It would be helpful if items for publication, including articles and talk topics with themes could reach Esprit editor by the 15th of each month: jantendys@yahoo.com.au or hand to Jan Tendys at the Sunday service.

Do you have a topic of a spiritual / ethical nature that you would like to share with the congregation? As Unitarians, we support an "Open Pulpit" and invite members of the congregation to lead the service if they so wish. *Please see Caz Donnelly at the Sunday service*

Fellowship contact 0466 940 461

Website www.sydneyunitarians.org