Monash Lodge Continue Local Support

Monash Lodge No. 938 once again held an unforgettable charity Theatre Night at the Malvern Theatre Company. This year the event was arranged to support a local Malvern charity, Very Special Kids. This charity was chosen as the Lodge aims to support the local community in whichever way they can. For WBro. Kevin Fowler of Monash Lodge it also had a personal connection as his friend worked at the Very Special Kids hospice and he was informed on the help and services they offer.

Very Special Kids is a hospice in Malvern that caters for terminally ill children and provides end of life care and respite care. They also offer counselling services before and after the death of a child, with no cost to the parents.

The Theatre Night was held by the local Live Theatre Company. In their final dress rehearsal, Monash Lodge invited members of other Lodges and members of the public to come along free of charge, only requesting a $20 donation to charity per visitor. Supper was also served and provided by the members of Monash Lodge - approximately 120 people attended the event. The event was organised by the WBro. Kevin Fowler and the Social and Community Awareness Committee.

This year, with the assistance of $3,000 from the Freemasons Foundation, Monash Lodge No. 938 donated an impressive $5,000 to the charity.
As Monash Lodge No. 938 organise the event every year, it was clear that doing well for their community was a part of every day for this Lodge.

“A charity is an integral part of the Masonic philosophy - we are purely fulfilling our commitment as Freemasons,” WBro. Fowler said.

Congratulations to Monash Lodge on organising such a successful event!

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Middle Park Lodge No. 206 recently presented a cheque for $15,000 to the New Hope Foundation (NHF), a local not-for-profit organisation located at the Grattan Gardens Community Centre. The Grattan Gardens Community Centre at 40 Grattan Street in Prahran is just down the road from the Prahran Masonic Centre. The Community Centre is the central base for NHF’s Aged Services programs as well as a hub for senior citizens from all walks of life, with many being locals who have lived in the area for over 50 years.

The New Hope Foundation (NHF) was first established as the Migrant Resource Centre Prahran, in 1981, operating out of Victoria Street, Windsor. Whilst the organisation has undergone many name changes, it has always adhered to its aims to help migrants and refugees adjust to life in Australia and become great contributors to our country.

The NHF recognises the contributions that these senior citizens have made to the community and it works hard to keep them active and connected. The NHF also sources, trains and matches same-language volunteers to be community visitors for frailer citizens in their homes, or residents of nursing homes and also provides volunteer visitors for residents of the Royal Freemasons Homes.

The NHF also looks after those senior citizens whose frailty and illness have made it difficult for them to attend their seniors clubs. This assists them to maintain their connections to their local communities.
Transport is a major issue for many of the senior citizens, even in a well-serviced area like Prahran due to the safety of getting on and off a tram or bus, or it being risky for them to even consider using such forms of transport. The NHF, through its volunteer network, assists with driving mini-buses to transport senior citizens to and from activities.

When the brethren of Middle Park Lodge were made aware of NHF’s need to upgrade its mini-bus fleet, they voted unanimously to support this local charity by donating the sum of $15,000 towards the purchase of a new $40,000 mini-bus. The brethren of Middle Park Lodge considered the NHF’s charitable aims as being similar to those of Freemasons Victoria - to help those in need in the community.

The NHF gratefully accepted a cheque for $15,000 on 15 November 2016 at a presentation that not only included the brethren from Middle Park Lodge, but also the Chief Executive of Freemasons Victoria, Jane Sydenham-Clarke and Deputy Grand Master, RWBro. Keith Murray.

Mr Ross Buscemi, General Manager of the NHF, stated that Middle Park Lodge’s donation would be duly recognised and acknowledged by having the square and compasses painted on the sides of their new mini-buses.
Bro. Basil Lyon Honoured for Black Saturday Contribution

The 2009 Black Saturday Bushfires were one of the most catastrophic natural disasters Victoria and Australia has seen. The fires occurred during extreme bushfire weather conditions and resulted in Australia’s highest ever loss of life from a bushfire. Emergency services were on hand along with many local volunteers who helped Victoria and the entire community through this tragedy.

Amongst the support team was Freemason Bro. Basil Lyon.

During 2008-2009 fire seasons Bro. Lyon was based at Cann River in East Gippsland, working as a Forester for VicForests. The year before, he had spent a season as a Project Fire Fighter. Despite being relatively new to fire fighting, he rose to the challenge in order to support the community.

Bro. Lyon was part of the Incident Control Centre in a support capacity at the time of the Black Saturday Bushfires. In August he was awarded with an Emergency Services Medal, an honour sponsored by the Queen. This achievement reflects the support, generosity and hard work that Bro. Basil Lyon and many other servicemen and women contributed at the time of the disaster, not to mention all the volunteers who gave up their time to be involved.

VicForests held their annual dinner at a conference centre on the outskirts of Melbourne in August. It was here that the Assistant Chief DELWP fire officer along with a former State Senator presented the medal to 40 past and present VicForests staff including Bro. Basil Lyon.

Bro. Lyon has been a Freemason since 2013. It was in 2012 that his intrigue with Freemasonry became apparent.

“My curiosity for Freemasonry as an adult developed when I found an old book on Freemasonry (a lexicon of the craft from the 1890’s) in a book store in Hamilton. After reading the book I had many questions, so I contacted the local Worshipful Master of Hamilton Grange Lodge to discuss. It was here he asked if I wanted to join Freemasonry.

“As a child I was aware that Freemasonry existed. My grandmother spoke to me about her father’s involvement in Freemasonry in the Casterton community.”
Since the Black Saturday Bushfires, Bro. Lyon has continued to better the community in many fire management activities.

A truly humble award to receive – congratulations Bro. Basil Lyon!

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**Honouring a Founder**

RWBro. William Charles Vahland, one of the foundation inductees into the Freemasons Victoria Hall of Fame, has been commemorated in Bendigo by the refurbishment and re-installation of one of his great 19th century pieces of civic architecture - the Vahland Drinking Fountain.

To mark the occasion, the City of Greater Bendigo has also renamed the area in central Bendigo where this monument stands as William Vahland Place. The Lodges of Bendigo and the Freemasons Foundation are proud to have been major supporters of this project.

The drinking fountain is a column of engraved and polished granite several metres high on a tooled granite base with lion’s head shaped water spouts, topped by four ornate Victorian lights, and surrounded by what were originally granite horse drinking troughs.

RWBro. William Vahland, Secretary of Golden & Corinthian Lodge No. 7 for thirty-nine years, was the architect responsible for much of Bendigo’s heritage streetscape. He not only designed banks, churches and town halls, but also miner’s cottages and workplaces. He was also a founder of the Bendigo School of Mines and the Bendigo Building Society (now Bendigo Bank). In 1880, he was commissioned by the City to design and build three great water features in the heart of the town - Alexandra Fountain, Cascades and the drinking fountain. The water features were to form a triangle of civic display a few hundred metres apart.

The Alexandra Fountain is still standing in the crossroads and is a popular postcard icon of Bendigo. The Cascades, an artificial waterfall tumbling down Rosalind Park has been restored over the last few years after being buried for decades. The drinking fountain was thought lost, yet most of the pieces were scattered around Bendigo.
In 2015 when the centenary of Vahland’s death highlighted his work, the rebuilding of the drinking fountain was considered and Bendigo’s Lodges and the Freemasons Foundation were keen to help. Much of the structure was able to be recovered, but it required a great deal of specialist stonework and masonry to bring it back to its original glory. The drinking fountain was publically unveiled on Sunday 2 October 2016 and it now stands proudly as part of Bendigo’s heritage. Freemasonry is noted in the engraved surrounds as one of the major financial contributors to the project.

A stone of appreciation to Freemasons at the foot of the drinking fountain

Freemasons Foundation Scholarship and Award Applications

Freemasons Foundation Victoria Limited Scholarships and Awards

Freemasons Foundation Victoria Limited is offering a range of scholarships and awards for secondary and tertiary students for the 2017 education year.

Further information is available at www.freemasonsfoundation.org.

Mo Doubt About It – It was a Great Success!

For Freemasons Cycling Club (Vic) and Wodonga Lodge No. 156 members, Movember provides a terrific opportunity to participate in raising money and awareness for prostate cancer. The Chiltern Mo Ride took place in Chiltern and its surrounds.

The 5th edition of the event saw the riders set off on their 65km journey in near perfect conditions - the day was sunny, the volunteers and spectators were happy and the Peloton was ready to roll. Six FMCC (Vic) riders trekked over hills and through the dales and pedalled and along the way collected others who were riding alone or struggling and tucked them into the group. Once again the square and compass jersey was of interest amongst the crowd and a key conversation topic.

Meanwhile back in the park, Wodonga Lodge Brethren were involved in conversations of their own, about a very similar topic. The presentation of a $200 cheque to event organisers on behalf of the Lodge was thankfully received and earned multiple mentions over the loudspeakers to the waiting crowd. The Masonic information brought along to the event combined with people engaging with members prompted several enquiries from interested persons.

With another successful Mo Ride event completed, the riders headed home to Wodonga, Wangaratta, Shepparton and Melbourne. Wodonga Lodge members adjourned to the Rusty Bike Cafe in Yackandandah for a District 108 organised lunch.

What's next for club members? Before the FMCC (Vic) Ride for headspace 2017, the conversations and planning will focus on the Ballarat Cycle Classic and the Lake Hume Challenge.
Festivities at Jonadab Lodge!

Christmas was celebrated by members and guests of Jonadab Lodge singing merrily on high at the Christmas function on Friday 2 December. The Lodge appreciated that so many guests attended to share the evening.

Andrew Sloane, Principal of Norwood College in Ringwood, attended and accepted four scholarships on behalf of the student recipients of this year’s grants. These scholarships are awarded to children who are disadvantaged and who would benefit greatly from receiving the grants. Mr Sloane spoke about the recipients and their journeys while still respecting their privacy. Their stories touched the entire room, and were a reminder to those who attended that they are able to make a difference and their support adds value to the community.

The Lodge also welcomed representatives from the Treasured Babies Program and Sids & Kids (now known as Red Nose). Jonadab Lodge, the Croydon Men’s Shed and Treasured Babies have had a wonderful association through building the Angel Boxes and a variety of donations and fundraising events. This rewarding relationship is a cause that is close to many of the members at Jonadab Lodge. There was also a presentation of a donation and a speech about the expansion of the program, the people it supports and the opportunities to become part of the support network.

With the rebranding of the charity to Red Nose it has created a powerful force for positive change. The charity now supports families suffering the loss of any child in various circumstances. In recent years, Red Nose has seen a decrease of SIDS by 85% which is something that the organisation can be really proud of.
Jane Sydenham-Clarke, Chief Executive of Freemasons Victoria, was a guest speaker for the evening and spoke eloquently about the challenges Freemasons Victoria face to become relevant to today’s men. She spoke about the language used to describe Freemasons, and what Freemasonry is and does. It was also reiterated that men moving through the various stages of their lives can be supported and their lives enhanced through Freemasonry.

As part of this initiative, a survey to members was distributed. Members were encouraged to give their insights and information that will help Freemasonry to move forward into the 21st century.

Ms Sydenham-Clarke also spoke about the positive value of women in Freemasonry taking on influential roles and as partners, and how they support the organisation to grow and develop.

After this thought provoking address, there were more Carols and toasts. The highlight of the Carols was *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, conducted by Gavin Birch. WBro. Geoff Kelly and partner Robyn East’s ‘two turtle doves’ was particularly resounding.

The Carols were followed by an informative speech about the origins of Christmas by RWBro. Len Lacey, then the evening wrapped up in traditional fashion with *Auld Lang Syne* and the National Anthem. After such a successful evening guests, Freemasons and partners then dispersed with many good wishes to enjoy the festive season upon us.