

Our first quiet hero



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #9b9b9b;"] Most artists don't make much money. Only a handful can pursue their art full-time, regardless of their talent.

Despite this, many artists remain committed not only to their work, but to encouraging other artists so that, together, they can form a vibrant and resilient community that makes our world so much more interesting.

Megan Nicolson is such a person. The Warrnambool artist makes stunning lino cut prints and a range of quirky soft toys called 'softies' (more about those in later editions), and also donates a huge slice of her time and energy to building up the local arts community.

She has been a central figure in the collective, [The F Project](#), and this year organised two successful artists' markets that helped raise funds toward the establishment of the new [Artery](#) art space at 224 Timor St, Warrnambool.

Somewhere in there, Megan also parents four children – two still below school age – with her partner Lachlan. It is this

combination of creativity and generosity of spirit that makes some artists so special and this is why Megan Nicolson has been chosen as our first quiet hero.

Bluestone Magazine is donating a voucher for coffee and cake to each of our quiet heroes. This week it will be at Wyton Events and Catering, Warrnambool.

[box type="bio"] *Do you know somebody in South-West Victoria who is worthy of recognition as a quiet hero? If so, let us know via email – in 200 words or less, plus a photo – and we will consider them for our weekly column. Email us at editor@bluestonemagazine.com.au[/box]

Why not...give away flowers?



[box] This section – why not? – is a place to consider ideas: no matter how small, large or outrageous.[/box]

This week: Why not give away something to a stranger?

Our first 'why not?' was inspired by a routine trip to the East Warrnambool Woolworths supermarket early one morning, where Louise was suddenly approached by a man bearing a bouquet of flowers. This doesn't happen often.

He introduced himself as the store manager, or something similar, and explained that the flowers were past their sale date, but still too beautiful to throw in the bin.

'Take them,' he said.

So Louise did. And that simple gesture made the perfect start to a day.

If you own a business, maybe you too have something a little past its sale date, but still too beautiful – or useful – to throw away.

Why not pass it on?

Swimming in words



[Image: Amelia Schmidt]

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A99E90;"] P
[/dropcap]eople rarely need an excuse to go to Port Fairy, but if you love books, writing, or just words, this weekend is the perfect time to visit the quaint fishing town for the **Ex-Libris Festival of Words**.

The event runs from Friday to Sunday and this year's theme is *Dressed to Kill*, offering the tantalising combination of crime and fashion.

Once again festival co-ordinator Marg Sinnott and her team have pulled together an impressive line-up of authors and guest speakers, including the former editor-in-chief of Vogue Australia, Kirstie Clements, former detective Simon Illingsworth, prolific children's author Justin D'Ath and the Western District's own, much-loved ABC announcer Derek Guille.

In keeping with the community spirit of the festival, there is a vast array of events to suit all tastes and many are free.

For a full listing of guests and a downloadable copy of the program, please visit the Ex Libris [website](#).

In conjunction with the Ex Libris Festival of Words, quirky local bookshop **Blarney Books & Art** (James St) is holding its

annual children's picture book illustration exhibition, which this year is called UNREAL.

Helen and Des Bunyon from Customs House Gallery are hosting the event, which is now – remarkably – in its 24th year.



The Arrival: Shaun Tan

Again, the line-up of work to be displayed is impressive and includes illustrations by the award-winning Shaun Tan, Leila Rudge, Judy Horacek, Felicity Marshall and Mark Wilson.

(And be sure to tuck an extra couple of dollars in your wallet, because it is almost impossible to walk out of Blarney Books without buying at least one secondhand gem tucked away on their shelves.)

For more about the illustration exhibition, visit their [website](#).

Blue tunes #1

Who doesn't need a little music in their life now and then?

Given our name is Bluestone, we figure it is only appropriate to choose some music that features the word 'blue' in its title or lyrics.

Once you start looking, it is incredible how many songs have something to do with blue.

Here is our first choice – relax and have a listen...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGkaMfloq9E>

Climbing the cape: Cape Bridgewater

After living in Tasmania for a time, the bar had been set very high for bushwalking. A visit to Cape Bridgewater, however, exceeded all expectations.



The view from the top of Cape Bridgewater back to the bay is simply spectacular.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] E
[/dropcap]xactly where the Great Ocean Road comes to an end in south-west Victoria is open to debate, but those who turn off too early – say, at Port Fairy – are missing one of the most spectacular beaches and cliff top walks in the state.

Cape Bridgewater is only 20km west of Portland and wraps itself around a long, crescent-shaped beach that is perfect in itself for a long walk, but the real joy lies in a two-hour return walk to the tip of the cape that takes in two seal colonies.

You can prime yourself for the walk ahead with a morning coffee at the charming [Pickled Pelican café](#) in Percy St, Portland – say that three times quickly – or breakfast at the funky [Bridgewater Bay Café](#) that has absolute waterfront views. (Unlike many beach cafes, this one is open all year round).

The walk starts with steps up from the carpark about 100m west of the café, although we still managed a wrong turn and ended up on a wheelchair ramp rather than the steps, which was slightly embarrassing.



The seal viewing platform gives a birds-eye view of the wildlife.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] F
[/dropcap]rom the carpark, the track meanders high along the farmland boundary before descending to the shoreline where [Seals by Sea Tours](#) run seasonal boat trips out to the seal colonies, cutting the travel time to a few minutes. For those who like to walk, however, the trek is just beginning.

The track rises up to the cape in a steady climb, but is still steep enough in parts to work up a sweat on a warm day and requires a reasonable level of fitness (be sure to carry a water bottle, and binoculars are also handy).

The views as you move up and along the cliff face become increasingly spectacular and are equal to those of the more famous parts of the Great Ocean Road around Port Campbell and Peterborough.

[quote type = "center"] Allow time for plenty of stops to take photos, as on a clear day, the views across the bay are vast and breathtaking.[/quote]

While the scenery alone is worth the walk, Cape Bridgewater is also home to the largest mainland colony of fur seals in Australia and there are two viewing platforms from which to watch them at rest and play.

The first platform overlooks a flat rock that is equivalent to a seal sun bed, while the second, at the end of the walk, looks down on a reef that the seals use for surfing (this is where the binoculars come in handy).

[quote type="center"] While wildlife is wonderfully unpredictable, we were lucky enough to see a dozen or more seals frolicking in the surf and catching waves like Kelly Slater.[/quote]

The geology of the area is also fascinating, with the tip of Cape Bridgewater actually part of a volcanic crater – such facts always make my head spin.

After a packed lunch, the return walk was less arduous, being mostly downhill, but equally as beautiful, with the mid-afternoon sun shimmering on the water.

This is a walk that is not too long, not too difficult, and very rewarding: perfect for a fine spring day.



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[Hey, hey Heywood](#)

[Cafe Bagdad pops up in Penshurst](#)

