

TRANSCEND: OCTOBER

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter 2014
60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds



Services: Sundays 10 am

'FORGIVENESS'

The sermon preached by Ray Gormann at Ascot Vale Uniting Church on 14/9/2014 : Text Matthew 18:21-35

CS Lewis (author of Narnia books as well as some adult Christian books) has an interesting take on this matter of forgiveness. He said, "Everyone thinks forgiveness is a good idea... until that day comes when they really have to forgive someone".

How it is one person finds it within their heart to forgive a person who has wronged them while another cannot or will not? Is it something to do with a decision of the will, much like we say loving is a decision of the will, a decision that this is something I have to do, must do and now want to do.

One thing that riles people is when they think they are being told or ordered, to forgive. It feels to that person that not only have they first been mistreated by another person's actions but now to compound their violation someone else is now trying to take away from them something they are entitled to hold onto. Something that may have grown to be a mark of identity, may have grown to be part of them and a precious sustaining part – their sense of outrage, justifiable anger, hurt, resentment, sense of being a victim and on the high moral ground

And you cannot just tell someone they have to give all that up. A person has to come to the place in their lives when they are ready and willing to put it down. But this is one of the hallmarks of those found in the company of Jesus.

Peter in today's passage is just starting to learn this; about how Jesus is going to change things, expand his horizon and stretch his capacity to be loving and forgiving. So Peter jumps in and he takes the 3 times forgiving that was the accepted principle in the religious society of his day, not only doubles it, but then adds another time – giving a total of a whopping 7 times. Phew! Jesus, I can see in my mind, looks at Peter with a wry smile, acknowledging Peter is beginning to catch something of the radical, life transforming power of the Spirit in this new reign of God... he look at him with love and says, "7 you think? ... 77 times I say".

Whether you read his answer to Peter as "77 times" or "70 times seven," the point is the same. Jesus answers Peter by telling him not to assume that you can count how many times you offer forgiveness and then be done with it. Forgiveness must become a practice -- a commitment -- that is to be sustained and renewed each day throughout our lives. It is not a single action, feeling or thought. Living with a spirit of forgiveness becomes an embodied way of life in an ever-deepening friendship with God and with others.

Maybe what we are aiming for here is to get in some practice that comes from living a lifetime of working on the smaller offenses, and grow up a spirit that recognises the need to be forgiving, so that when the day arrives when there really is a decent sized act of forgiveness staring you in the face, (as per CS Lewis quote) you have some basic tools, some orientation, some experience to call upon.

Steven McDonald is a policeman who was shot in the line of duty by a young man robbing a convenience store. Since being shot he has not walked and still has a bullet lodged in his spine. He is paralysed from the waist down. When asked about this matter of forgiveness he said, "Yes, I have forgiven the person who shot me... for today. Tomorrow when I wake up and have to be got out of bed, showered, dressed and fed I'll remember again what has been taken away from me. I will have to forgive him again... but I will". No such thing as forgive and forget really is there? Not in that case anyway.

And as a bit of an aside on this matter of forgiveness... we need to seriously consider the matter of timing or appropriate readiness. We in church too often in past have been guilty of moving too quickly to this injunction of Jesus to forgive. And because just this week I attended the UCA ethics training which focussed on matters surrounding child abuse and the current royal commission I am thinking here about people who have been violated. Need or necessity to forgive is not the first word in this situation. It just adds another burden, another layer of guilt and responsibility. The time may come down the track and often it is years down the track when these things will need to be spoken of and addressed. But the first word the church needs to speak in such situation is the word, Justice. Justice is the first requirement in the types of situations I spoke of.

While our holy scriptures are chock a block full of references to forgiveness it is also secular psychologists who are doing interesting and ground breaking work teaching people of the practical benefits of growing a forgiving nature. Stanford University's School of Education is running a project where they teach the basic orientation and life skills needed to foster forgiveness.

The Stanford Forgiveness Project teaches its participants how to "reduce resentments, give up grudges, stop harboring hurts, let go of vengeful ideation, and stop blaming others"-the very lessons Christians are urged by their holy scriptures to adopt.

(<http://learningtoforgive.com/9-steps/>)

What is it we are talking about in all this talk of forgiveness? A working definition of forgiveness they use is the, "willingness to abandon one's right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly injured us, while fostering undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her". P.T.O

From Page 1.

Some key words about why forgiveness is so often an anguishing and difficult thing. "right to resentment etc" and "one who unjustly injured us", "foster an undeserved quality of compassion etc". I think the definition makes clear that there are two aspects to forgiving someone. If you have been wronged and you are going to forgive someone else then what you are doing is bestowing an undeserved gift upon the other person. But secondly you are also giving yourself a gift by laying down something heavy and wearying that you have been carrying, sometimes for many years. And that is your sense of resentment, being the victim, being angry, being tied to a person you have very negative feelings about but you is a constant companion.

One of the people I knew in a past congregation was giving me the story of their life which contained a lot of negative experiences with their father. I commented that his father (who had been dead for a good number of years) was a close figure in this person's life. Close, he spluttered I can't stand him! Oh no I don't mean you like him, I just mean he lives with you every day of your life. And since you are saying you can't stand him maybe it is time to move away from him and get some much needed distance.

"hate is like an acid. It damages the vessel in which it is stored, and destroys the vessel on which it is poured." (Ann Landers)

Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, to savor to the last toothsome morsel of both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back—in many ways it is a feast fit for a king.

The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you.

—Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

If you really want to get back at someone who has hurt you understand that the best revenge against your enemies is to live a successful and happy life.

Back to Stanford program... I think it true that finally God gives the grace to forgive but this process of fashioning a forgiving heart can be learned. The Stanford group teaches participants, in six one-hour sessions, simple visualization and behavioral modification techniques that enable them to see

* how their minds create and maintain grievance stories from past negative experiences,

* how they damage themselves psychologically and physiologically when they continually replay these stories,

* how they can give up their grievances by taking them less personally and looking at the offending person in a more positive light.

Although some participants choose to hold on to past hurts and not forgive their offender, the majority, who decide for forgiveness, improve measurably in their emotional and physical health and in their interpersonal relationships at home and at work.

That is the essence of forgiveness: the lifting of a burden, the releasing of a debt, the refusal to allow past actions and failures to define the future.

What about forgiveness in the situation of someone who does not deserve it? I get asked sometimes.

Well the Aramaic word for "forgive" that Jesus would have used means literally to "untie."

The fastest way to free yourself from an enemy and all associated negativity is to forgive. Untie the bindings and loosen yourself from that person's ugliness. Your hatred has tied you to the person responsible for your pain. Your forgiveness enables you to start walking away from him or her and the pain.

Forgiveness is for you and not the other party. Freeing yourself through forgiveness is like freeing yourself from chains of bondage or from prison.

And it is a hard fought place to get to. Let us make no error there by thinking because Jesus instructs us as a basic requisite to imagine it comes easily. Many of us will need professional help to get to that place in our lives where we are finally freed from the clinging hurts, resentments, from being imprisoned in our own grievance stories that we have erected as our life story.

One of the reasons it makes good sense to forgive, apart from the theological reason that God is going to have a heck of a lot of trouble for some reason forgiving us if we are unable or unwilling to forgive others, it takes a lot of energy, concentration, distraction to maintain the hard edge of unforgiveness. Takes it away from positive life giving pursuits. Takes it away from growing a gracious and well rounded soul.

A good analogy is trying to hold a beach ball under the water. Get a large enough ball and it takes all our energy and focus.

Just let it slip through our grip once and it will shoot up to the surface, and sometimes with enough force to break the surface of the water and leap into full view above everything, thereby attracting much attention.

Rev. Ray Gormann

"Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies."

— Nelson Mandela

"As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison."

— Nelson Mandela

COME AND HELP

**WORKING BEE AFTER THE FAMILY SERVICE ON
SUNDAY OCTOBER 12TH**

**JOBS INCLUDE GARDENING CLEANING, TIDYING
PLEASE BRING SOME LUNCH TO SHARE, TOOLS ETC.**

For further information speak to Ken Roberts

SERVICES: Sundays 10am

DATE 2014	SERVICE/ LEADER	OPENING & CLOSING	COMMUNION ELDER	DUTY ELDER	MUSIC	READER	WELCOMER	MORNING TEA
5 Oct	Dr. Julie Hall	Dina Bente			Rob	Chris	Marycon	Ken/Jenny
12 Oct	Communion Rev. Ron		Dina	Dorothy	Maria	Angelika	Gavriel Family	Jill/Barbara
19 Oct	Rev. Ron				Dorothy	Ken	Chris	Marycon/ Angelika
26 Oct	Rev. Ron			Noel	Candace	Barbara	Ken/Jenny	Dina/Jutta
2 Nov	Communion Rev. Ron		Angelika		Rob	Marycon	Michael/ Melita	Chris/ Lodenah

Kid's Uniting - Sundays, 10 to 11 am



FAREWELL, THANK YOU AND BEST WISHES CLAIRE

Claire Sidlow has been one of our Children's Church Teachers since July 2012.

We are very grateful for the excellent work she has done with our children. We have all appreciated her kind, caring and sincere nature and the dedication she has shown.

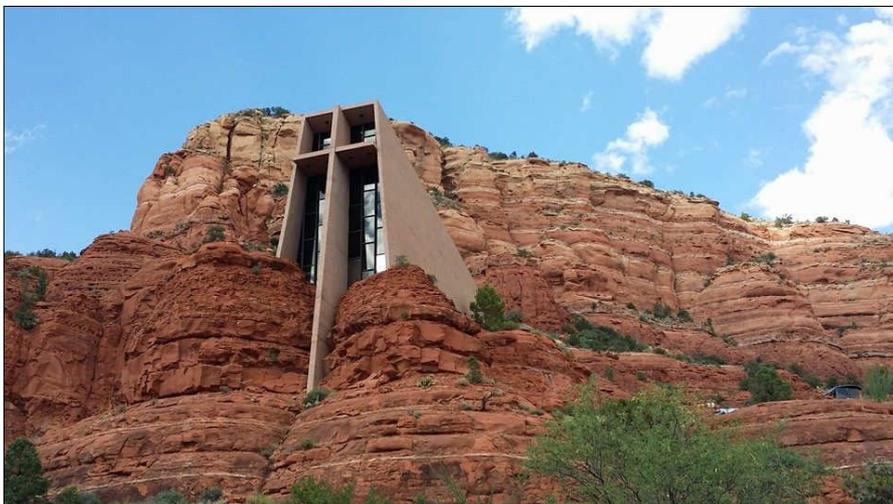
We all wish Claire every success and happiness as she moves to Brisbane to take up her new position with the HIV Foundation of Queensland.

HOLIDAYING IN THE U.S.A.

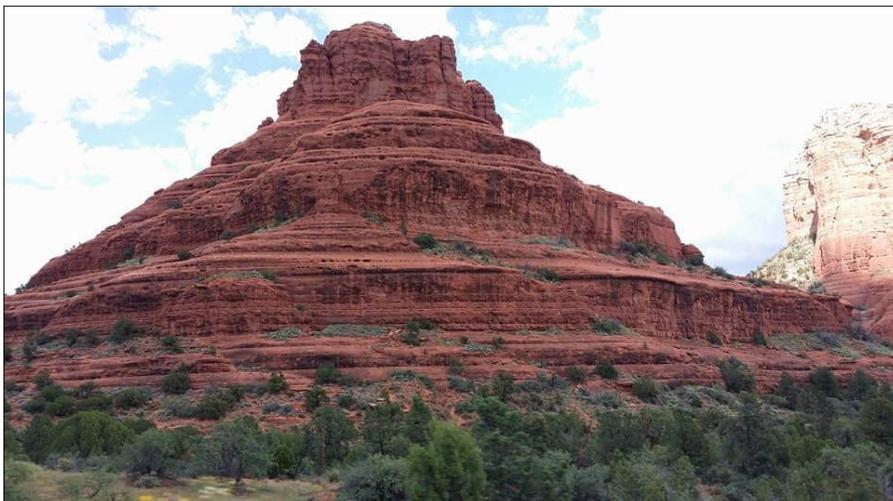


Ron and his family are having a well deserved holiday in the USA.

They visited Sedona in Northern Arizona.



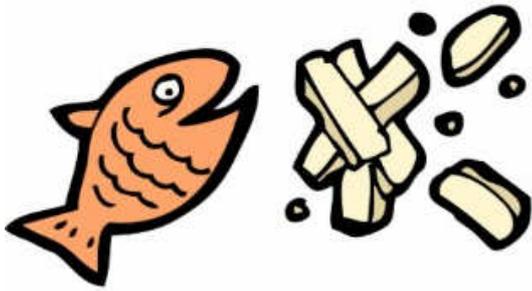
Sedona's main attraction is its spectacular red sandstone formations. The formations appear to glow in brilliant orange and red when illuminated by the rising or setting sun. The red rocks form a popular backdrop for many activities, ranging from spiritual pursuits to the hundreds of hiking and mountain biking trails .



Pow Wow at Rock Ledge Ranch

FISH AND CHIPS / MOVIE NIGHT

The planned social night this Saturday 27th September has had to be postponed until next Saturday 4th September.

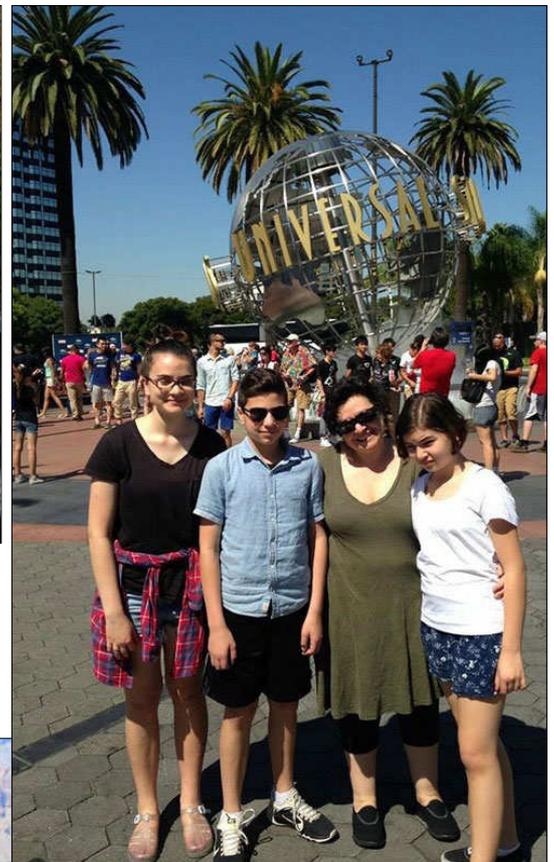


SO COME ALONG TO THE FISH AND CHIP & MOVIE NIGHT SATURDAY OCTOBER 4th. FROM 6.00 pm

Bring some food and join us for a relaxing evening of entertainment for all the family.



Catching up with Matt at the Rocky Mountains



Visiting Universal Studios



The Grand Canyon



SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE NEWS

Dear Friends,

Firstly, the SEJC would like to thank you all for your support for two recent petitions:

- asking the Federal Government to abandon plans to withdraw the Dementia Care Supplement previously paid to Aged Care Facilities (this petition attracted 20 signatures)
- the "Monster Climate Petition", which asked the Government to take urgent measures to combat Climate Change. You helped us collect around 80 signatures – a great result!

Next, the Victorian Election is coming up at the end of November. So that we can all make a responsible decision on how to vote, it has been proposed that we draw up and send a questionnaire to local candidates of all political parties, asking them to outline their party's policies on a number of issues of particular importance to us as individuals and Christians.

Some issues of concern could be these:

- Renewable Energy (the state government has a role to play in promoting the use of solar energy and the development of wind farms)
- Homelessness and Housing (there are an estimated 22,000 people, including 5000 children, homeless in Melbourne every night)
- National Parks and other nature reserves (ranger numbers have been repeatedly cut, morale is low and many parks are neglected, with facilities in poor repair)
- TAFE Funding (has been cut, resulting in the loss of hundreds of staff and dozens of courses, and fewer educational opportunities for our young people)
- The East-West Link (will be enormously costly. Many people feel the public has been poorly informed, and that environmental concerns have not been considered or addressed)
- Public Transport (Victorians are still waiting, for example, for the long-promised railways to Doncaster and Melbourne Airport).

Many of you may have other issues on which you would like candidates to be surveyed. If so, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the next couple of weeks!

Thirdly, we will be losing Claire Sidlow from our committee, as she will shortly be moving to Brisbane to take up a position as Organisational Support Officer with the HIV Foundation of Queensland. I'd like on everyone's behalf to heartily congratulate Claire on gaining this coveted position! We are very grateful, Claire, for all your contributions to our church's Social and Environmental Justice work, including running fund-raisers for HIV support and the Youth Climate Coalition, organising our film night in aid of Asylum Seekers, and representing the AVUC at a number of justice and environmental rallies. You will be really missed, but we all wish you all the best in your new home, work and life.

Unluckily for us Claire's departure, combined with the death of our faithful supporter Pat Riedl earlier this year, leaves the SEJC very much depleted. We urgently need other members, so we can continue to plan and provide opportunities for AVUC members to speak up and to take action for a better society and a better world – as we believe God wants us to do. If you are concerned for justice, compassion and the environment, and could help in any way by coming to occasional meetings, offering suggestions, or being willing to help organise activities, please talk to me – we do desperately need your help!

With best wishes, Dorothy Howes

Ascot Vale Uniting Church

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ELDERS

Peter Macdonald
Dorothy Howes
Angelika Ranellone
Melita Long
Michael Long
Noel Lloyd
Dina Monaghan

*'Transcend' is published monthly
Articles and photos are welcome.*

*Email to the Editor
Robin Waltrowicz
avuniting@hotmail.com*

MYSTERIOUS

Oh, life is a mysterious, strange affair,
neither here and now, nor, is it there.
Precious objects found, lost along the way,
once important matters, no longer hold sway.

This path cannot possibly, be one and the same,
yet, I know it somehow, as if through a pane,
of glinting glass carved, cut into sacred signs,
and by the Holy Music, that vibrates the divine.

Patricia S.

What was the Change that Changes Everything?

Strathmore Uniting is running a series of talks by Father Richard Rohr.



Richard Rohr

Rev Andrew Boyle (their current minister) is leading the sessions which have already engaged participants in active discussions on Thursday afternoons.

Via a video, Richard explains in a conversational style events that have shaped Christianity over the past 400 years. Don't hesitate as it is not an intellectually challenging study.

A warm welcome awaits those who awaits those who come along.

The sessions will be run at the Strathmore Church.
Times and dates to be confirmed.

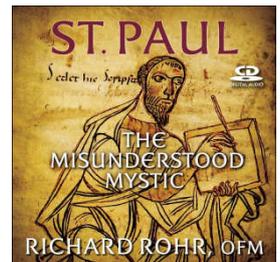
Evening options for the Rohr study series.

Option 1 – Wednesdays fortnightly. 1/10, 15/10, 29/10, 12/11,

Option 2 – Mondays weekly. 6/10, 13/10, 20/10, 27/10

For further details please contact:

Margaret Fanner 9379 6819 mfanner@bigpond.com



SOME NEWS FROM STRATHMORE UNITING

Margaret Fanner told me that Strathmore Uniting is going through the process to obtain a .5 minister. They decided that because of the pain caused by the Uniting Our Future debacle and the complexity of shared ministry they would like to have their own .5 Minister. We wish them success as they work their way through the process.

R.W.

THE 9 STEPS TO FORGIVENESS

1. Know exactly how you feel about what happened and be able to articulate what about the situation is not OK. Then, tell a trusted couple of people about your experience.
2. Make a commitment to yourself to do what you have to do to feel better. Forgiveness is for you and not for anyone else.
3. Forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciliation with the person that hurt you, or condoning of their action. What you are after is to find peace. Forgiveness can be defined as the "peace and understanding that come from blaming that which has hurt you less, taking the life experience less personally, and changing your grievance story."
4. Get the right perspective on what is happening. Recognize that your primary distress is coming from the hurt feelings, thoughts and physical upset you are suffering now, not what offended you or hurt you two minutes – or ten years – ago. Forgiveness helps to heal those hurt feelings.
5. At the moment you feel upset practice a simple stress management technique to soothe your body's flight or fight response.
6. Give up expecting things from other people, or your life, that they do not choose to give you. Recognize the "unenforceable rules" you have for your health or how you or other people must behave. Remind yourself that you can hope for health, love, peace and prosperity and work hard to get them.
7. Put your energy into looking for another way to get your positive goals met than through the experience that has hurt you. Instead of mentally replaying your hurt seek out new ways to get what you want.
8. Remember that a life well lived is your best revenge. Instead of focusing on your wounded feelings, and thereby giving the person who caused you pain power over you, learn to look for the love, beauty and kindness around you. Forgiveness is about personal power.
9. Amend your grievance story to remind you of the heroic choice to forgive.

The practice of forgiveness has been shown to reduce anger, hurt depression and stress and leads to greater feelings of hope, peace, compassion and self confidence. Practicing forgiveness leads to healthy relationships as well as physical health. It also influences our attitude which opens the heart to kindness, beauty, and love.

Stanford University
<http://learningtoforgive.com/>

"Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude." Dr Martin Luther King

Wife: "How would you describe me?"

Husband: "ABCDEFGH IJK."

Wife: "What does that mean?"

Husband: "Adorable, beautiful, cute, delightful, elegant, fashionable, gorgeous, and hot."

Wife: "Aw, thank you, but what about IJK?"

Husband: "I'm just kidding!"

A FAREWELL LETTER FROM CLAIRE

Dear Ascot Vale Uniting Church

I am writing a letter of resignation of my Sunday school teacher position. The last two years has been an amazing experience for myself.

I thank AVUC for always putting on a smile and sense of optimism towards myself as I have battled in trying to find secure employment.

I thank you for letting my creativity, public speaking and social awareness grow and blossom through being a part of the social justice group and teaching your children.

My favourite aspect of my time as Sunday school teacher is the awesome lack of a filter the younger children have and how they make sense of Christianity and God. An example of this was earlier in the year while we were talking about the old testament and we were talking about the creation story with an evolution perspective, the children came up with the idea that we human didn't evolve from monkeys but mermaids (due to them being human fish).

Alas the next stage of my life has come and I am heading off to Brisbane for my dream job, the job is organisational support officer at the HIV foundation of Queensland (I still have to pinch myself that I have landed this job). I am a mix of excited, terrified and general disbelief about my move to Brisbane I know it will sink in and I know the challenges coming up for me will help my grow even more.

Lastly thank you all for your support to me through out my time at AVUC, and I will see you soon.

Kind Regards and much love

Claire

5000
Poppies



POPPIES

*The slip knot secure on the knitting needle
I begin—adding stitches as contentment & warmth builds
Bright red wool, softly runs through my fingers
Rows added, the shape slowly appears
Thoughts run deep, whilst hands are busy
Remembering brave men, fighting for our freedom
Wool as red and thick as blood
Symbolic, as another row is completed
Sons, fathers, uncles, brothers, lovers
Many died, but not forgotten
Nearly complete—a centre of black, as we mourn for them all
A few scraps of green, to show new life, the gift they gave us
The finished product—A beautiful RED POPPY—made with
love*

The slip knot secure on the knitting needle.....

By Teresa Ellum

RULES FOR TEACHERS - 1872

1. Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the daily' session.
3. Make your pens carefully. You whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.
4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of this earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.
9. The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves.

RULES FOR FEMALE TEACHERS 1915

- You must be home between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. unless attending a school function.
- You may not loiter downtown in any ice cream stores.
- You may not travel beyond the city limits unless you have permission of the chairmen of the board.
- You may not smoke cigarettes.
- You may not under any circumstances dye your hair.
- You may not dress in bright colors.
- You may not ride in a carriage or automobile with any man unless he be your father or brother.
- You must wear at least two petticoats.
- Your dresses must not be any shorter than 2 inches above the ankles.

Thank you Bob and Mary-Con for sending in these lists that they got from a museum in Mulwala.

They are often displayed in small museums and at other historic sites.

Are they genuine?

Research by snopes.com raises some doubt.

'The bottom line is that nobody has ever been able to verify the authenticity of this list of rules. It has been reproduced in countless newspapers and books over the last fifty years, and copies of it have been displayed in numerous museums throughout North America, with each exhibitor claiming that it originated with their county or school district. It has also been offered in a number of different guises, such as a list of rules for sales clerks at W.T. Stewart's department store in New York, for floor nurses in a hospital, and for the employees of a New England carriage works.'

If these documents were genuine, why wouldn't the headings simply read "RULES FOR TEACHERS"? Did the rules change so frequently that including the year was necessary to avoid confusion?

p.s

As an retired teacher I feel that at least some of the rules do have a ring of truth.

I can recall a school inspector sending a female teacher home to change because she was wearing jeans to school.

R.W.