

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Lots of good things happening in the Club at the moment. First of all, four of our ladies have come up with the idea of a Book Swapping activity. Everyone is welcome to bring books along that are of interest as several of our members (not surprisingly) are into reading. Thanks to new member Barbara as well as Genelle, Judy and Marion who came up with this great idea. Already there have been books rolling in and I would encourage everyone to be involved.



Coming up on Sunday 20th August is our annual tournament, held at the usual venue of the Baulkham Hills Community Centre. If anyone could help out with providing food, taking entry fees, preparing nibblies during the day or helping sell raffle tickets please see me in the next couple of weeks. All help is appreciated. Even better – enter the tournament!

T H E H I L L S T O U R N A M E N T

Sunday 20th August 2017

*Baulkham Hills Community Centre Conie Ave.
Baulkham Hills*

New format: Divisions of 3 or 4 depending on entries

*Registration: 8.30am-9.00am for a 9.15am start
8 games - 44 mins*

**Cash Prizes for 1st 2nd 3rd
Plus High Word & High Game**

**Plus Highest Scoring Words Starting with
O.P.E.N.**

**Plus Highest Rating Gains Above and Below 1300
Cost \$25.00 for ASPA members; \$35.00 for non members**

To Register: email criskris@bigpond.net.au
Or phone 0410 448 286 (Chris Ostrowski) by 6pm Sat
19th Aug 2017

CELEBRATION ISSUE

July is a month notable for two significant National Days. The 4th, of course, is American Independence Day while the 14th recalls the storming of the Bastille in France.



Trivia question: what is the symbol of the connection between these two nations? Answer: the Statue of Liberty was given to the USA by France as a gift.

So, because it's the "birthdays" of two nations, it's only a small jump to focus on the birthdays of some of the members of our club and link those birthdays to famous people or events.

So, on with our birthdays! What do they reveal?

17th March A Birthday Portrait by Robin

My birthday is the 17th March which is also St Patrick's Day. The word PATRICK is allowable in Scrabble. It's an old Irish coin. PATRICK has an anagram which I have illustrated. The picture helps me remember these words.



Another piece of trivia: The contribution above identifies Robin's birthday as the 17th March, which also happens to the same date when, in 1963 and living in Brisbane, I received my first letter from a young girl in Sydney who wanted to be a pen-pal. Well, we not only wrote to each other weekly for eight years, but we are now married. That young girl, of course, is my beautiful wife Kris. A date to remember!

17th January

Diana shares her birthday with Michelle Obama.



Bingos from Michelle: MICELLE.

4th May

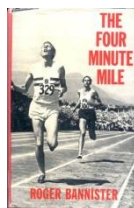
Krystyna and **Glenn** share their birthday with the outbreak of the Great Fire of San Francisco in 1851.



Ironic fact: It's also the birthday of Audrey Hepburn. Well, I thought it was faintly amusing!

6th May

Not only **Bob's** birthday, but the day Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile and George Clooney's birthday. These qualities of athletic prowess and devilishly good looks also apply to Bob.



17th June

Two well-known Americans were born on this day. Our own **Alice** and the equally famous John Fitzgerald Kennedy.



Some websites say you can use JFK as a noun but of course, it's out of bounds for respectable Scrabble players.

14th July

Already famous for Bastille Day (Vive la France!), it is also **Genelle's** birthday.



No other birthday or historical event comes close in importance to France's birthday, so let's see the bingos we can find in REVOLUTION. They are: EVOLUTION, INVOLUTE, OUTLINER, OUTLIVER, OVERTOIL, VIRULENT, VOLUTION, ELUTION, LOONIER, OUTLIER, OUTLINE, OUTLIVE, OUTLOVE, OVERLIT, RETINOL, RIVULET, ROUTINE, TORULIN, TROOLIE, UNRIVET, VENTURI, VIOLENT, VOITURE (actually, the French word for "CAR"), VOLUTIN and of course REVOLUTION.

27th August

Two dynamic events happened on this day. Krakatoa exploded in 1883 and **Gerard** was born (much later).



As is often the case with Hollywood, films don't always tell the truth. The film, *Krakatoa, East of Java* is geographically incorrect. It is actually west, but the film makers didn't think the title sounded effective with "West" in the name!

19th October

Appropriately, two wonderful people were born on this day. Mother Teresa and our **Renate**.



INDIA is acceptable in Scrabble but not INDIAN.

1st November

That's my birthday. All Saints Day. Enough said.

Chris

WELCOME TO THE CARTOONIST STUDIO



One of our newer members, Bob Williams, has revealed a talent that is sure to provide us with many chuckles from time to time. Cartoonists are a rare breed, but a cartoonist with a penchant for Scrabble is quite sensational!

Enjoy the original work by Bob displayed on this page.



Question: What is the longest-running cartoon series ever? If you guessed **The Simpsons**, you'd be wrong. The Simpsons first aired in 1989 and has been aired continually since. But The Simpsons has a long way to go to catch the Japanese animated series, **Sazae-san**, which dates from 1969 and is still current.



SCRABBLE BABBLE

Scrabble might have started slowly but now has spread (perhaps infiltrated) into so many aspects of our culture.

Scrabble pops up in episodes of *Seinfeld* and *The Simpsons*, and in lyrics sung by Kylie Minogue (who grumbles in *Your Disco Needs You* about 'Desperately seeking someone willing to travel; You're lost in conversation and useless at Scrabble') and Sting ('IQ is no problem here; we won't be playing Scrabble for her hand, I fear' he announces in *Seven Days*).

In film, its tiles have been used to hint at and decode evil, as in Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures*, where a teenage murderess spells out the word 'putrid', or that scene from *Rosemary's Baby* in which Mia Farrow, unknowingly impregnated by Satan himself, uses Scrabble to help unscramble anagrams.



The game is a common pop culture reference, appearing in episodes of *The Simpsons* and *Seinfeld*.

It's there in literature, too, referred to by authors from Garrison Keillor to Charles Bukowski, whose poem *Pulled down shade* ends with "Scotch and Scrabble". In *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, the game becomes thrillingly illicit when the Commander has Offred play against him.

Vladimir Nabokov, it's said, liked to lay down words in different languages but it's a fair bet that most writers would be left in the dust by true Scrabble aficionados. Though words are its currency, it's really a game about anything but. It's a spatial game, a game of patterns and of memory. No wonder many top players have a mathematical rather than a linguistic background. You certainly don't need to know what an obscure two-letter filler like 'ee' or 'da' means in order to play it, only that it appears on the endorsed word lists.

English is very much a second language for some top players – the highest single-play score on record is 392 points for 'caziques' (ancient Mexican princes), as laid down by a Kurdish Scrabble buff named Dr Karl Khoshnaw at a match in Manchester on 1982. Not that the tiles on a board bear much similarity to the English we use in our daily lives. When Paul Allan became 2013's British Scrabble champ, for instance, he did so with a string of esoteric words like 'coniines' (a poison found in hemlock) and 'bandura' (a Ukrainian lute).

They don't drug test at tournaments but as Stefan Fatsis observes in his book *Word Freak*, if they did, some players would probably be banned for life. Other cheats are harder to pull off. The tiles used competitively, for instance, are specially manufactured to prevent competitors from 'brailing' – trying to feel what the letters are as they pull them from the bag. The bag itself, incidentally, must be held at eye level or higher – just one of the specifications in a rulebook that's over 20 pages long.

Scrabble is a game of patterns and of memory - many top players have a mathematical rather than a linguistic background.

The letterati, as Paul McCarthy dubs them in the title of his book about the scene, keep lists of the letters they've played to help them figure out what might be on their opponent's rack. Their world has its own terminology, too – 'coffeehousing' is the frowned-upon practice of chatting during a game to throw your opponent off. A 'bingo' is when you use all seven letters at once for a 50-point bonus. A 'phony' is a word that isn't a word – at least, not according to the official word lists, of which there are two – one for North America, another for the UK.

Fascinating stuff, no doubt, but I'd like some theoretical psychologist to one day unlock the secrets of why it is so addictive.

You know who I'm talking about, don't you?

