

Please keep your clothes on and your reality check off.

I have been busy with the end of my High Schooling daughter, exams, many lifts, emotional journeys and now it's all done. She passed and can get into the tertiary preferences, and is now planning a good future,(if the Mayans are wrong, and lets all hope that this goes just like the Y2K or whatever disaster that never happened).....

I have vaguely watched the cricket as I became President of my Artists Society, hosted an Exhibition Opening and an AGM, and the closest I have come to the footy personally (until last night) was renewing my membership, buying the fabulous new 140 year memorial scarf which gave the Saints the pizzazz missing in this year's dreary, shortened, grey toned version, gave it pizzazz and the extra inches chopped off from this year.....

I have been to the St.Kilda Football Clubs AGM and seen all the players sit through the meeting part, get the newbies introduced, hear the quite good speech from the Coach Scotty Watters, and then watched the boys quickly disappear at 8pm to drive the hour back to where most of them live. We got lost getting to Frankston because we turned off too early from the freeway and my Iphone got turned upside down and I took my poor Uncle Bob the wrong way for 20 minutes in peak hour traffic. We had a conversation with our CEO Michael Nettlefold, post AGM, he approached us and started chatting and my Uncle thought I knew him, he was being so engaging (but I don't) but I am planning a visit to the boys next year in Colorado (I'll be in the States) and my mate Michael N said to stay at the same hotel (and who wouldn't take up **that** invitation) and we'll hear about New Zealand deals and opportunities in January.....

I have continued to listen to SEN since season end, and heard about all the new recruits and seen players mostly come, and Brendon go. And Lenny's heart be repaired.

I have been to the wonderful Almanac launch and found myself in footy heaven, chatting, putting faces to names, and because of my appalling memory, doing it again. I continue to enjoy the madness, and have my name in the Age as one of the few mad women amongst the club of mostly men. And I took Uncle Bob to his first Almanac function, and hopefully not his last. And Rina came too after coming to the Grand Final one in 2010. A long time between drinks.

And I have begun to read the 2012 Footy Almanac and give it as gifts and sell off a few to others to give them as gifts. It's been a busy few weeks, months and years.

So, after all this busy-ness, a thought floated through my mind at the AGM last night and again today.

Everyone is soooo hopeful of a good 2012 for their teams. We are all watching the new recruits and the old boys get fit and ready to roar into another season. The AFL are marketing geniuses, with so many others summer sports on offer, we still can be obsessed with Aussie Rules, right up to the beginning of the next season. We are all watching modifications to the footy clubs organisational structures, footy departments, coaches, assistant coaches, health departments of the footy club. Adjustment and staff swaps. Retirements and transfers. Drafts and more drafts. We are **all** going to have an improved 2012. All of us hope for a scandal-less, injury free and safe break. It's our Christmas wish. It's our New Year desire. We all have our bags of hopes and dreams. All of us. From

18 teams. From all over the country and to the far flung edges of the world where Aussie rules matters, and isn't that everywhere.

We are all hopeful, we are all in love with our team, our boys, even if they are from somewhere else, if they are in our jumpers, our colours, our club, they carry our dreams.

But if these boys take their jumpers off, they all look the same. They are all young men, some very young men, who for a period of time, put their bodies on the line for our viewing pleasure. They are interchangeable. It doesn't matter who they are in particular (unless they are Lenny Hayes or Adam Goodes or Jobe Watson etc), they are ours once that jumper is slipped over their heads. They become ours. We love them until we don't anymore (if they go to another team). We can love them forever if they retire one of ours, but once the colours are off, the jumpers are swapped, we follow mostly the jumper not the man.

So that was one thought. Thinking of half-naked indistinguishable footballers. Good thought, a bit perv-y from an old bugger, but nice.

The other was that collective delusion we have that our teams can be the one in 18 that gets the golden egg, the silver cup, that time in history where the story will be happily told for years and years to come. As our teams and their mechanisms begin to pump us up for victory of that Cup in 2013, we continue our collective madness that is Aussie Rules, and await the reality to see if, with the help of the footy gods, it's our turn next.

Happy Almanac-ing to you all and a safe and healthy season and new year.

Yvette Wroby

20th December 2012