



MARCH 2020 NEWSLETTER

Hello to all our members.

I'd like to briefly talk about positivity and how it relates to film-watching.

My film review column for the Mountain Views Mail has never used numbered ratings, but my film reviews on YouTube would always end with a rating out of five.

To me, **five stars** is *very good/excellent*, **four stars** is *good*, **three stars** is *mediocre*, **two stars** is *bad* and **one star** is *very bad*, with intermediate levels between each full star.

Positivity is, in general, a good thing to promote. The world can always use more happy vibes, especially now.

But negativity is also important for robust, honest discourse. We need negative comments to understand our flaws and learn how to improve.

British writer, musician and vlogger Claudia Boleyn has discussed how in certain pop culture fandoms, including *Doctor Who*, sexist or racist comments by a vocal prejudiced minority result in other segments of the fandom overcompensating with excessively positive comments. By overcompensating against bigots in the fan community, the rest of the fandom ignores genuine narrative or production problems for the sake of being positive.

British-American disability activist and deaf YouTuber Jessica Kellgren-Fozard warns against "toxic positivity" toward disabled people. While remarks such as 'You'll get better' or 'Just stay positive' are usually well-intentioned, Kellgren-Fozard observes how such comments can emotionally harm disabled people (especially those with chronic conditions that won't "get better") by preventing them from accepting their condition and working through it. Such comments can even place blame on disabled people for "not being positive enough".

This issue relates to a brief op-ed I wrote last year about whether it is appropriate to use the word "hate" in film reviews. Art and film are important, strong emotional reactions are good as long as they are supported by rigorous analysis, and using the word "hate" in a review does not trivialise the word – especially if "love" is an appropriate word for a review. If a film is atrociously inept or morally offensive, then such a film deserves some intensely negative words.

Both positivity and negativity are healthy and deeply important for film-watching and film criticism.

If you strongly dislike a film, don't be afraid to give it a low rating in the Star Box, or wherever else.

You're not being a sourpuss; you're being **honest**, and we welcome it.

In other news, the committee has finalised the program for the Warburton Film Festival in June. We've assembled a very exciting assortment of films, including documentaries, thrillers and character dramas, and I'm very pleased that we've scheduled a science fiction film (*Ex Machina*) and it's **not** relegated to the late-night genre slot! :D

The Healesville Mini Film Festival is nearly upon us, and I hope you have a great time with this triple-feature of acclaimed recent French films.

Three esteemed long-time members of the Film Society have been honoured with lifetime memberships, and Bernie Shakeshaft won the Australian Local Hero Award in January.

Our debut screening for 2020, *The Hundred Year Old Man Who Climbed Out The Window and Disappeared*, was a resounding success, and I'm thoroughly looking forward to future screenings.

Cheers.

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP



Three Yarra Ranges Film Society members were acknowledged with lifetime memberships at this year's first Warburton screening.

In 1980, **Maggie Sail** placed an ad in the local paper looking for people who would be interested in watching movies regularly as a group. She had six replies, and the Yarra Ranges Film Society was born. Maggie has been a long-term committee member and is heavily involved in the Show Us Your Shorts program in the Warburton Film Festival.

Laurie Hastings has been a member for 18 years, and served as Treasurer for at least 12 of those years. Laurie has a great love and knowledge of film, and is an expert at sourcing films from all over the world. He spends a great deal of time on legal matters such as licensing and screening rights so that we can access a wide variety of films.

Dagmar Limp was President of the YRFS for 10 years and was a good friend of the late filmmaker Paul Cox. Dagmar has been part of the YRFS for more than 20 years. She is a loyal participant in all the societies' activities and was instrumental in starting the Show Us Your Shorts program, which is held every year in the Warburton Film Festival.

2020 AUSTRALIAN LOCAL HERO AWARD

Armidale activist Bernie Shakeshaft received the 2020 Australian Local Hero award in January.

Bernie is the founder of the BackTrack Youth Works Program, which rehabilitates troubled youths, gives them caring support, teaches them responsibility, and has dramatically reduced Armidale's youth crime rate.

He attended the Warburton Film Festival in 2019 and ran a Q&A session after the opening night screening of Backtrack Boys.

2020 MEMBERSHIP

Regular:	\$70
Concession:	\$65
Youth Membership (Under 25):	\$35

Anyone who hasn't yet renewed their Film Society membership can rejoin at the *Healesville Memorial Hall* in Healesville or *Upper Yarra Arts Centre* in Warburton.

Renewing at a Film Society screening is not recommended, but still possible.

We also urge you to encourage friends and family to join the Society.

2020 HEALESVILLE MINI FILM FESTIVAL - 15 March 2020

9:45 am	<i>Custody</i>	2017	93 mins (approx.)	Rated M
1:00 pm	<i>Who You Think I Am</i>	2019	101 mins (approx.)	Rated MA15+
3:15 pm	<i>Just To Be Sure</i>	2017	100 mins (approx.)	Rated M

The event will have a *lavish French-themed lunch* catered by **Susanna Luebbers Catering**, with a maximum of 60 seats/diners.

You are **required to book ahead if you want to attend the lunch**. You can book in person at the Healesville and Warburton cinemas or online through a link on the Yarra Ranges Film Society website. **The lunch may already be booked out, so get in quick.**

<https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/Events/Healesville-Mini-Film-Festival>

The lunch is charged separately from the films themselves.
The *booking deadline* is **March 10**.

FILM SOCIETY DVD LIBRARY

The DVD library is now open again.

You can browse our rental catalogue on the Film Society website, then reserve your desired DVDs through the curator at the respective Warburton and Healesville screenings. The curator will then bring your reserved DVDs to the next screening for you to collect.

You can find the catalogue through this link:

<https://www.yarrarangesfilmsociety.org.au/section-1-film-library.html>

STAR RATINGS AND REVIEW FOR *THE HUNDRED YEAR OLD MAN WHO CLIMBED OUT OF THE WINDOW AND DISAPPEARED*



4.2 from Healesville

4.4 from Warburton's viewers

4.3 overall

My rating: **5 out of 5**

The Hundred Year Old Man Who Climbed out of the Window and Disappeared, based on the bestselling novel by Swedish author Jonas Jonasson, is a poignant, tense and hilarious comedy with outstanding performances and character writing.

Allan Karlsson (Robert Gustafsson) is a simple elderly man with a love for explosives. On his hundredth birthday, Alan decides to escape his drab retirement home and embarks on a bizarre adventure.

The performances are slightly stylised, in keeping with the film's absurd scenarios, but convey very authentic emotion, and director Felix Herngren has a great sense for strong, sustained tension.

After Allan unwittingly steals a suitcase full of gang money, the gangsters trailing him grow increasingly desperate, but Allan and his friends always remain a few steps ahead of them in amusing ways.

Gustafsson has relaxed chemistry with his co-stars, and the film has an endearing subplot in which Gunilla (Mia Skäringer) and Benny (David Wiberg), two strangers pulled into Allan's journey, slowly bond and the latter learns to loosen up.

In her dying moments, Allan's mother tells him not to think or talk too much. This becomes Allan's mantra, as he effectively coasts through the twentieth century, getting by on luck and other people underestimating him.

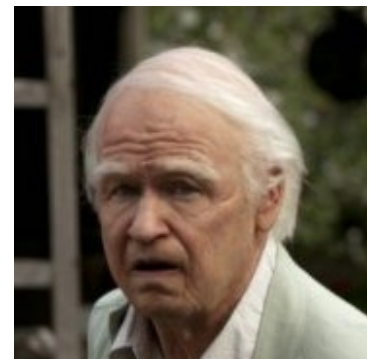
I was right to compare this film to *Forrest Gump* in the previous newsletter, as flashbacks show Alan stumbling into several important events throughout the twentieth century: he helps Robert Oppenheimer build the atomic bomb, befriends Franco and President Truman, gets thrown into a gulag by Stalin and becomes a double-agent for the US and Soviet Union.

The film's moral of 'don't think or talk too much' doesn't mean we should avoid thinking entirely; more that we should think **efficiently**.

This is a moral we can all get behind.

FRITZ'S POEM

I prepare for the worst and I worry a lot
In case there is an unforeseen plot.
I look out for parking long before reaching my goal
And see a lot of negatives as a whole.
The film, the 100 Year Old Man Who Climbed out of the Window – and – and – and
Then took me to a different land.
A land where plots do not matter,
Where there is no fear.
Where the things that matter are the now and here.
Where the weirdest things have a funny side
And whatever happens, you come along for the ride.
The film is a wonderful creation
With many a farcical situation.
It changed my perspective on the world today
And blew some negativity away.
I still do things my way, try to get them right
And won't blow up bridges with dynamite.
But I stop endless procrastination
And start looking for parking at the destination.



F.R.
February 2020

MARCH'S SCREENING

Secrets and Lies

1996 British drama Rated PG 142 minutes (approx.)



Directed by Mike Leigh, *Secrets and Lies* is a rough-edged but sensitive drama about race and class in Britain, and follows a successful London optometrist as she searches for her birth family.

WARBURTON SCREENING: Tuesday March 10

HEALESVILLE SCREENING: Tuesday March 17

APRIL'S SCREENING

Living is Easy with Eyes Closed

2013 Spanish comedy-drama Rated M 108 minutes (approx.)

WARBURTON SCREENING: Tuesday April 14

HEALESVILLE SCREENING: Tuesday April 21