

# Patty Mark: Another Inconvenient Truth-Sayer

Guest Speaker at SKHS Meeting Sunday 9 September 2007

**Patty Mark**, president of the Australian animal advocacy organization Animal Liberation Victoria (ALV) and director of the ALV Rescue Team certainly shocked and awed the well-attended September meeting, which was widely publicised by Carmel Shute, City of Port Phillip Media Officer.

Not that many of us were ready to hear or even think about what Patty came to tell us:- that most of the eggs and chicken meat we consume come from millions of hens caged up in factory sheds, standing on sloped mesh in cages so small that the birds crowded into them cannot open their wings or even lie down comfortably. And, most, if not all of them are fed growth hormones and antibiotics to make them lay eggs more quickly. Plus, the male chicks are macerated for fertiliser, sometimes while still alive.

During the meeting, Patty talked to us about her own journey from a dairy farm in America where she grew up as one of twelve children to her revulsion (and revelation) when she saw goats' heads on the menu while cycling through Greece with her Australian husband. Prior to her taking up her mission on behalf of animal rights, she was a professional therapist in the field of mental health. She is also the mother of a son and a daughter, and just recently, graduated to the status of grand-mother.

Animal Liberation Victoria began in St Kilda after Patty put up a note reading 'Help the Hens' at a local milk bar in 1978. Patty is also the editor of *Action Newsletter* which she founded in 1980. Her passion to improve conditions for battery hens led to the incorporation of ALV as a non-profit animal rights organization, with a strong focus on factory farming.

For over ten years she and ALV members documented conditions in factory farms, laboratories and abattoirs all over Australia.



Image downloaded from [alv.org.au](http://alv.org.au)

ALV wrote countless letters, attended numerous meetings, submitted reports to legal authorities, lobbied government agencies, and begged the police and the RSPCA to do something about improving living conditions for hapless animals.

In 1993, out of sheer frustration, Patty instigated ALV's non-violent Animal Rescue Action. Patty told SKHS members that the Rescue Team have physically saved hundreds if not thousands of emaciated animals. Most are taken to the vet for treatment and then cared for in members' backyards. The team have also exposed some appalling abuses and mindless mutilations that go on. Some people who run egg factories burn off the tips of the birds' beaks in a painful and disfiguring operation known as 'debeaking'. A number of farmers de-horn cattle, and perform 'mulesing' of sheep, a euphemism for slicing chunks of flesh from their backsides without using painkillers.

Patty's experiences range from abattoir workers menacing the team with angle-grinders to going to jail for 'trespassing'. Patty has personally refused to pay fines or accept a sentence to do community work as this would acknowledge she has done something illegal when all she does is prevent more acts of needless cruelty.

Although ALV's main focus is on the abolition of institutionalised cruelty to animals, however, since 2000, Patty and her team have been working towards getting her fellow humans to recognize that farmed animals are sentient beings, not property to be exploited for our consumption. Now a committed vegan, Patty commented that we shudder from cooking cats, dogs and horses, yet we go along with slaughtering cattle and sheep, pigs and poultry.

Just as we were about to congratulate ourselves for mostly consuming free-range poultry and meat, Patty told us that barn-raised is not what we think it is either. Not all barn-raised poultry and grass-fed livestock cavort around in the sunshine and fresh air before being slaughtered and dismembered for human consumption. Sometimes it just means – slightly bigger cages for poultry and bigger pens in pig and cattle farms.

**Vegan recipes and enquiries:**  
**[alv.org.au](http://alv.org.au) or phone 9531 4367.**  
**Op-Shop, 1355 Toorak Rd,**  
**Camberwell. Donations of**  
**books & goods welcomed.**

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In scenes reminiscent of the Abolition of Human Slavery Movement, it must be said that Patty Mark and ALV's Animal Rescue Team show great courage in the face of farmers, politicians, the RSPCA, as well as the police whose duty it is to uphold the law against cruelty to animal beings. (FB)

# *Stories of the Pavilion*

by Alex Heydon

Guest Speaker at SKHS Meeting 12 August 2007

Alex Heydon, Graduate of a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Professional Writing and author of a 20,000-word dissertation, titled *Stories of the Pavilion*, talked informally to SKHS members on Sunday 12 August. The subject of his talk, *The Pavilion* – now known simply as the Kiosk – was built in 1904 and burnt down in 2003.

Heydon told of his association with the Kiosk and surrounds to the waterfront area of Hobart, where he grew up. On seeing the building burn down from his parents' balcony on Beaconsfield Parade, Alex felt so moved by the loss as to write a story for his undergraduate degree titled, *Losing Kerby*. In 2004, he took his passion for writing about the Kiosk further when he drove the 16-hour journey to Lake Macquarie to interview Colin Kerby as the basis for his thesis.

Colin originally lived in the Kiosk with his parents, Noble and Ivy, before moving in with his wife, Judy, after Noble and Ivy died mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. Colin, garrulous by nature, was at home retelling some of the stories of his 40-year stay at the Kiosk.



As well as describing how he came to write the thesis and pass his honours, Heydon also read from *Stories of the Pavilion*. Included in the readings were some of Colin's stories, retold by Heydon.

One such story was of Colin's father, Noble Kerby, who, after returning from World War II arrested a local Sergeant Police Officer interfering with the Kiosk's surrounds stating as he went "You're under arrest and I hope to Christ you resist arrest so I can give you a hiding!"

Colin "didn't know whether to grab a lump of wood and hit the copper or hit his father." The issue was resolved in an official Police Committee hearing where it was decided that the sergeant would be "sent up the bush" never to return to St Kilda to serve again.

Heydon quoted Kerby: 'People used to say to me, "You must have seen a lot of funny things down here [at the pavilion] and I'd say: "No, mostly events down here, that I've seen, have been tragic . . . The only true tales that I tell [may sound funny because] I put a bit of an amusing twist to them."

Beginning with this quote, Heydon told a story of Colin saving a European couple or "New Australians" from drowning at the back of the Kiosk one spring day in 1964. As the story goes, Colin was standing on the outside deck when he saw a man drowning. He watched as the man's wife bounded down the



10metres of rocks in two strides and "flopped into the water next to him".

Switching into lifesaving mode, Colin jumped in the water after them only to realise that the two of them were too much to handle at one time and were pulling him under. Noticing the women's erect nipples through her cold, wet top, Colin deduced that the only way to save the European couple would be to grab her by the nipple, thereby focussing her attention on the seriousness of their situation. He then proceeded to tow her – with her husband behind – in to shore. The couple, once safely back on land, thanked Colin before hurrying off down the pier leaving Colin panting for breath on the rocks.

These people were just two of the two hundred lives that Colin Kerby saved, and for which he was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 1984.

More St Kilda Pier and Kiosk stories can be heard by contacting Alex Heydon on 0434 141 466.