

# VOL. 2 | DECEMBER 2019

# RIVER REFLECTIONS



Professional and personal development for Rotaractors in Brisbane and beyond...



## OVERVIEW:

- Make those resolutions stick
- Classic writing mistakes
- Plan the ultimate holiday party

Please add the following dates to your diary:

7/8 Feb 2020

Australian Rotaract Conference  
May 2020

Shine for Shelterbox (date TBA)

To stay up to date with the latest news and events, join the Rotaract Brisbane Rivercity Facebook page or visit the website.

## Here's to another great year

Rotaract Club of Brisbane Rivercity would like to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season.

We are so grateful for the support that we have had over the past 12 months and look forward to the exciting things to come as we enter the roaring '20s.



## Getting it write

By Dean Heckscher

Writing can be a weird thing. You can write hundreds of words - some of the most elegant sentences in the world - but one error, one misplaced comma, can derail your whole paragraph. And while most small mistakes can be forgiven in the world of writing, coming across multiple common errors can quickly make you enemy number one to a writer or editor. To help you stay on the good side of wordsmiths, here are some of the more common missteps you should keep an eye out for when it comes to writing.

- **Double spacing** - realistically this won't worry many people, unless they are a writer, or they have OCD.
- **Consistency** - like most things, consistency is key. Sticking to the same spelling, or the same tone of voice or even the same structure (even if it's wrong) is better than being all over the shop. It's better to simply make the same mistake throughout than make 100 different mistakes.
- **Waffling** - this is a mistake that I'm very guilty of doing (I blame trying to meet the wordcount of uni assignments). Adding in unnecessary information, or taking too long to get to the point, gives the reader an opportunity to either skim through the rest of your writing, or simply give up on the whole thing.

***The word 'collygraphia' means 'writer's block'.***

- **Editing** - the bane of uni students, proofreading can make a world of difference to your writing. Editing can be broken down into three types - structural editing (looking at the piece as a whole and seeing if it makes sense from start to finish) copy editing (looking at paragraphs more closely to identify if each sentence flows onto the next one smoothly and carries the message of the piece) and line editing (everything from punctuation, voice, spelling and everything in between). Getting a fresh pair of eyes is always a good way to identify mistakes, as re-reading your own work for the 100th time doesn't always guarantee you'll pick up on an error.
- **Not having fun** - while not always possible depending on what you're writing about, your writing is an extension of your personality. Readers can gain a sense of who you are from your words, so you might as well as give them a glimpse of how you think and how you feel about a certain subject. Slipping a few puns in will also make your work a bit more interesting, especially if it's a boring topic, plus it'll keep you sane, which is always a bonus.



# Making those resolutions stick

By El Eldridge

Mention New Year's Resolutions and you will quickly be greeted with a mixed response. Although there are those amongst us who relish the chance to reset and create a series of goals that they will strive to uphold for the following 12 months (they're likely wearing active wear right now), for many of us, New Year's Resolutions are more well intentioned fantasies that are declared in a merry state at 11pm New Year's Eve, and indefinitely "postponed" when the choices of the night before hit at 11am January 1.

This year has, for me at least, felt like a complete whirlwind. There have been some spectacular highs that have been matched by some rather impressive lows. Fair to say, my reflections for the year will certainly not be boring. So, in the lead up to entering 2020 (20s!), I invite you to join me in reflecting on the year that has been by thinking about (or better yet, writing down), the following:

- What are you most grateful for?
- What are you most proud of?
- What were your biggest lessons?
- What did you find out about yourself?
- What are 3 things you want to do better next year?
- What are 3 things you want to maintain?
- What are 3 realistic intentions for you?
- This time next year what will your life be like?



## The case for cleaning up

*Make your zen place*

Our physical environments have a huge effect on how we operate. Chances are, when our spaces are a mess, so are we.

In fact, research suggests that our physical environments significantly influence our cognition, emotions, and behavior, affecting our decision-making and relationships with others.

Clutter can also affect our general mental health, making us feel stressed, anxious, or depressed.

Just taking 5 minutes out a day can have a huge impact on our wellbeing and quality of life. You can even make it a social activity - giving things you no longer need to friends.



# Let's get Merry: tips to planning the ultimate Christmas party

By Róisín O'Neill

It's Christmas time! I'm sure many of you have a million Christmas parties lined up for the festive season but if you are looking to plan your own I have some tips. Read on if you're keen to throw a truly excellent Christmas bash...

1. First thing first. *Lock in a date.* Christmas is a busy time for everyone so if you want people to attend you should send out invites early. Or just do what I do and have your party very early in the Christmas season, which also allows you to celebrate Christmas for a longer period of time! Win win!

2. It's your party so you want to make sure it is a stress free for you as possible! For me this means paper plates and cups and plenty of garbage bags on hand. I try to avoid getting up the next morning with a hangover and having to wash up. Also if clumsy people are invited to your party this eliminates the possibility of all your glassware breaking - another win win!

3. As the host you will have to tear yourself away from the stimulating conversations at the party a few times to sort things out, but again in order for your night to be stress free and enjoyable try and plan your food so that it doesn't require much cooking or assembling during the party. No one wants to see you all stressed in the kitchen trying to cook!

4. Probably one of the most important things about a Christmas party (for me) is definitely the music! Put in some time before your party to put together a playlist of fun Christmas tunes. You shouldn't rely on a generic Spotify playlist which could throw in a number of religious, slow and rather depressing Christmas carols. It's party after all - you don't want the mood brought down by Human Nature singing "Mary's Boy Child".

5. Finally, as it is a Christmas party you should have a festive feature to make it different from other parties. Obviously a tree/decorations is a must but I always add some festive cheer with some Christmas food. My go to is a **Christmas Sparkling Shiraz Punch** - but I can also recommend a wreath shaped pavlova with red fruit and mint leaves on top, or even some gingerbread biscuits! Of course if you're super lazy but keen to get your guests on a sugar high, you can always have some candy canes! I'm sure I've tempted you with the punch so here is the recipe...

## Ingredients:

1 bunch of mint  
3/4 cup superfine sugar  
3/4 cup fresh lemon juice (from about 6 lemons)  
2 bottles of sparkling shiraz  
3 litres club soda  
1 1/2 cups St Germain Elderflower liqueur

## Method:

Mix lemon juice and sugar in a large punch bowl or urn, stirring until sugar dissolves. Add shiraz, club soda and liqueur. Top with half the mint and stir. Serve topped with fresh mint and ice if you wish.



Hope your next Christmas gathering brings Yuletide merriment to one and all!

Merry Christmas!