

Community highlights: Rancid milk and a rare moon moment

Written by Molly Glassey, Audience Development Manager, The Conversation

The Conversation receives a lot of comments each day and it's pretty hard to read everything. That's why every few weeks we'll show off a selection of community highlights: comments we enjoyed or thought worth discussing.

Lukewarm milk and lunchbox woes

I couldn't help but grimace hearing the stories of lukewarm milk, soggy sandwiches and lunchboxes sitting in full sun that came out in the comments of [How to keep school lunches safe in the heat](#). I'll admit, I don't look back too fondly on the daily schoolyard stress of trying to trade my sweaty peanut butter sandwich for anything but.

It sounds like Dennis Argall had it a little tougher:

Primary school 1950s: the school system provided small glass bottles of milk for us all. These sat outside in the sun from very early morning till 11am. We did not die. At some schools magpies entertained themselves by punching holes in the bottle tops.

High school 1950s: return home again to make polite representations to mother, to which she more than once replied "oh you're the one that doesn't like vegemite and lettuce".

There is nothing quite like a vegemite and lettuce sandwich wrapped in old greaseproof paper in a paper bag, squittled in a school case from 8 to 1 in Sydney summer. I did not die but then I did not eat them. I do recommend them as compost starter.

We did not have lolly options or fruit juice options. Little plastic, tiny freezers if any.

Then Greg Hollands reminded us all there are still good people in the world:

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Oh Dennis, where were the milk boys? They should have been sacked! I was a milk boy at our school and charged with the responsibility of receiving the milk each morning (along with several others). It was stored in the “wash shed” - a slatted building with a tin roof with bubblers and taps for water during lunch and recess. We used old hessian bags which were soaked with water and placed over the milk crates. Guess what? Milk was still cold at recess and everyone was happy to consume. My wife had your experience and still has an aversion to milk today!

How to make people listen

On the piece [How to have a better discussion about Australia day](#), author and Honorary Associate in Philosophy Tim Dean jumped into the comments. In a timely fashion, the piece explored how debates around changing the date of Australia Day tend to run afoul of our sense of social identity, with a few tips on how to cut through and have a good conversation.

Stephen S Holden, Adjunct Professor, Macquarie Graduate School of Management, asked:

Well said. I hear you! But here's the nub, the conundrum, the paradox: how do we get the call to people to listen when they've already stopped listening?

Tim Dean replied:

That is, indeed, a challenge. I'd suggest two responses.

First, what choice do we have but to try to talk and listen better? If we give up on dialogue, then those with the most power win, and I don't think any of us (except those who hold power now) would want that.

Second, in my experience, when you reach out to people and engage in good faith and with

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charity, the response can be surprisingly positive. I engage with many people with whom I disagree - and I run workshops to help people disagree better - and my anecdotal experience is that people are relieved when the discourse improves. They also start listening more. That suggests not all is lost.

Cherished moon memories

Curious Kids is a series where youngsters send in their questions to The Conversation, and we ask an expert to answer them. Based on the comments, it seems it's not just kids smitten with the series. On our latest piece [Why can I sometimes see the Moon in the daytime](#) , we received this comment from Elaine Langshaw:

I was so grateful for this phenomenon of seeing the moon during the day, the very day of the first moon landing in July 1969. I was teaching a class of 6 year olds and naturally we did a science unit on space to prepare them for this momentous event. Unfortunately we didn't have television, we only had radio to follow the actual moon landing. Naturally, with six year olds, it was hard for them to understand that what was happening wasn't just a radio story like other stories we'd listen to as a class.

I glanced out the classroom window and, so exciting, I could see the moon in the sky. I took the class out into the playground and pointed to the moon, which we could all see clearly. "That's where the men are right now!" They have just landed on the moon in their little space craft: The Eagle has landed!" It was one of the most exciting moments for me as a teacher and for everyone else too that day I have always been grateful that the moon could be seen in the daytime in a beachside suburb of Sydney to share that moment with my class. I wonder if any of them remember the experience? Probably a bit too young.

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