

# Simon Voices



Simon Users Speaking

## A new Christmas, a new Year, a new Beginning

We would like to welcome you to the Christmas edition of Simon Voices.

We had such a great response to the last edition, with so many poems and stories sent in from the Simon Communities everywhere that we had to bring out a bumper edition for the first time.

We are excited to present to you, our readers, our new logo. A symbol of what we stand for – A voice for all.



New members are always welcome to our Group.

We welcome new ideas, poems, stories, jokes, puzzles and letters from you all.

### 10 Interesting Christmas Facts

**1** At Christmas, it is traditional to exchange kisses beneath the mistletoe tree. In ancient Scandinavia, mistletoe was associated with peace and friendship. That may account for the custom of "kissing beneath the mistletoe"

**2** Germany made the first artificial Christmas trees; they were made from goose feathers and dyed green

**3** Electric lights for trees were first used in 1895

**4** "Rudolph" was actually created by Montgomery Ward in the late 1930's for a holiday promotion. The rest is history

**5** "Jingle Bells" was written for Thanksgiving and then became one of the most popular Christmas songs

**6** Holly berries are poisonous

**7** In Mexico, wearing red underwear on New Year's Eve is said to bring new love in the upcoming year

**8** The first postage stamp to commemorate Christmas was issued in Austria in 1937

**9** The world's tallest Xmas tree at 221ft high was erected in a Washington shopping mall in 1950

**10** Handed down from the Druids, burning a Yule log was considered good luck and part of the ancient 12 day celebration

### IN THIS ISSUE...

#### Writer's Corner

Four pages of new pieces from our Communities starting on page 2.

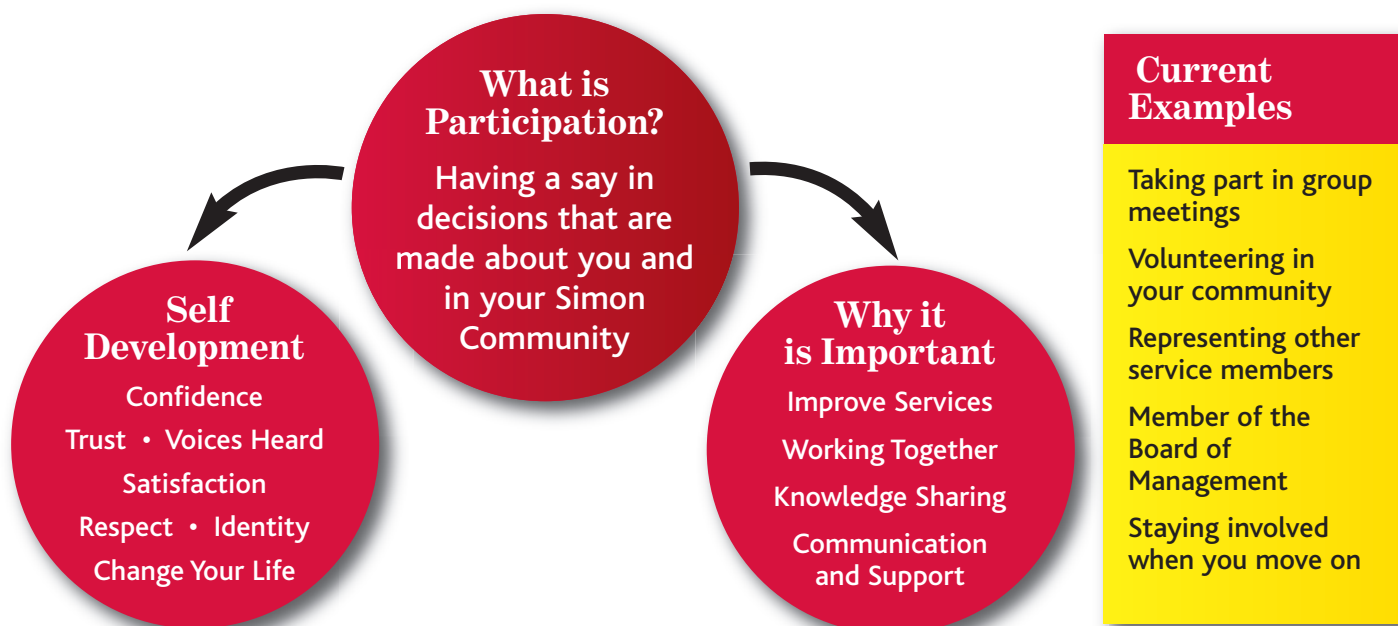
#### Be a Part of Action and Involvement

Turn to page 2.

#### Easy Recipes

A tasty Christmas dinner for one all wrapped up on page 6.

# Be a Part of Action and Involvement



## IT REALLY HAPPENED...

### Shaky Moments

We all get shaky moments when we say to ourselves, what is it all about? Because we are the way we are, that's the way we sometimes think.

I find I can support myself for a while and then the shakiness sets in. You start to doubt yourself and life itself and say 'what am I doing?' 'Is it worth it?' And most dangerous of all to say 'Ah, I think I'll go and get myself a few scoops, to hell with it all'. And the higher power steps in and clears the air and says 'Don't be so stupid, you can't drink, you can't stop when you start. Do you want all those ill effects back, like sickness, even death, homelessness, left with nothing or do you want your nice comfy bed and bright little safe flat where you have peace and you can use your time and brain to help others who are where you are?'

If you feel down and lonely, do something about it, start reading, writing, get peace into your head. There is nothing wrong with peace. Sit for a while in your flat and think what gives you peace, feel at ease and ask for peace and guidance. Plan what you would like to do. Get in touch with your supports. Ring people and tell them how you feel and what you want to do. There are so many options for you out there and so many people willing to help.



#### IF YOU DRINK YOU'LL DO NOTHING

Think about it hard, you know I'm right. With me at the moment I have loads of happy positive moments. Peace of mind, a job, happiness, positivity, money, holidays, and clothes. All this because I don't drink. And most of all freedom to do as I choose, not being held down by that awful addiction.

Make a balance, live your life simply and keep your supports strong and you can't go wrong.

*Shelly*

PS "Don't drink, do well.  
Drink =Unwell!!



## My Black and White Cat

He jumps for a fly, he catches  
my eye  
As I'm making mash, my  
mackerel disappears  
I look for my cat, he licking  
his lips  
What a wonderful life for a cat  
As I'm having a nap, he lies  
on my lap



I wake as he's caressing me down with his paws  
That's the life of my black and white cat

*Phoenix*

## Noah's Ark

Everything I need to know about life I learnt from  
the Ark

One, don't miss the boat

Two, Remember that we are all in one boat

Three, plan ahead, it wasn't raining when Noah  
built the Ark

Four, stay fit when you are 600 years old, someone  
may ask you do something really big

Five, don't listen to critics, just get on with the job  
that needs to be done

Six, build you future on high ground

Seven, for safety's sake travel in pairs

Eight, speed isn't always an advantage; the snails  
were on board with the cheetahs

Nine, when you're stressed, float a while

Ten, remember the Ark was built by amateurs, the  
Titanic by professionals

Eleven, no matter the storm, when you are with  
God, there's always a rainbow waiting

*Phoenix*

## The Time Traveller

Stark naked frame standing in its own faeces. But  
does it matter, I mean, is she important? the old  
woman who's thin white hair grows down to her  
ass. Gnawing on a thought, gnawing on raw  
knuckles, knuckles bleed, receiving no care, just  
staring, just staring. She moves like the undead  
toward the female nurse, moving with time as  
though it mattered. She receives a cigarette; she  
receives a trickling smile, though the cigarette will  
surely burn longer than she will.

*Alan Maguire*

## For Those Who Are Courageous

We met by pure chance, we met by the river.

She was gonna do it and nobody was going to stop her,  
nobody was going to intervene.

"Hey I don't want your problems lady,

I just wanna watch, I just wanna see someone do as  
they say.

This world is full of liars and cowards; ya can't trust  
anybody these days".

You could tell that she was hesitant; you could tell  
that she wanted an excuse, her eyes told me. But she  
never begged, she was so fucking brave. Perhaps I  
could've grabbed her, but who the hell am I to  
intervene.

*Alan Maguire*

## RIP Squeakers



"Mom, what's so wrong about being friends with  
mice"? "Well junior honey, they're small and  
squeaky and not very nice". "They terrify adult  
humans and resemble rats, but most of all because  
we are cats".

"We were domesticated by the Pharaoh's to keep  
mice at bay, "mom, but my rodent friend is okay".

"Now listen junior you must hate all mice, they  
laugh at us and then they toilet in the rice".

"Mom, but the human kids are allowed to keep  
mice", "but junior honey, that relationship is fake,  
those mice are being fattened to feed the pet snake".

"Junior, it's not natural for a mouse to be your  
friend, think of the message that it will send. Your  
father is ashamed and the other cats call us a  
disgrace, we may even be banished from the feline  
race. "Okay mom, I promise to hate all mice, I'm  
sorry squeakers, I hope you taste nice".

*Alan Maguire*

## Associates

They greeted each other with firm a handshake. The shorter of the two Frank, had an obvious tomato ketchup stain on his not so obvious dark navy tie. Earl his new associate and heaviest of the two, said nothing about the stain. He too had his fair share of stains in the past, strawberry jelly, chocolate, garlic mayonnaise to name but a few. Earl was desperate to mention the tie, but figured it would be rude, after all he and Frank would be working together.

For some reason the tie annoyed Earl, even as the pair drove to their destination. Earl would glance occasionally at Frank's tie, but Frank who was very self conscious was starting to get bothered. Earl kept glancing, then Frank asked what he was looking at, "nothing" Earl said, "don't lie" Frank said "it's the tie isn't it". "Okay" Earl said admittedly, "I'm just curious Frank that's all", Earl continued. "So why dark navy"? Earl asked, so Frank went into some story about his wife Rita, who one day found what looked like lipstick on one of his ties. Well long story short, she cut up all his black ties knowing they were his favourites.

"So I was just left with this dark navy one" Frank said. "Well why not get some new ones"? Earl asked, "I would but Rita won't tell me where she gets them" Frank continued. "I tell ya what buddy, Earl said "you can borrow some of mine", "thanks" said Frank. "Oh ya" Earl asked almost forgetting, "who did the lipstick belong to"? "Just Betty", Frank said, "she's a

dancer at the local lap dancing club".

"So she was worth it"? Earl said grinning; "yep" Frank said nodding. Eventually they arrived at their destination, both of them perplexed as what to do next. Two weeks previous they both, at the exact same time read an ad in a local paper. The ad contained the following; two men needed for job must wear black suits with black hats and please do not wear alternative colours, for I have perfect eyesight. Basically your attire should match. So the two replied at the same exact time and day both questioned by one man, Alexander Harmonious Bridalvice. Mr. Bridalvice spoke with a foreign accent, he spoke clearly yet no living person could make out which country he was descended from. Frank and Earl both agreed on Prussian, but couldn't quite place the oriental overtones.

Now Mr. Bridalvice was a busy man, but due to certain circumstances needed to hire two complete strangers, whom he would have to trust. So during the simultaneous interview both candidates were asked their age, height, marital status, even sexual preference. Earl was quite bothered by the sexual preference remark, after all this story takes place in nineteen sixty six and this was just before the sexual revolution, people were experimenting with mind altering substances and the stupid war in Vietnam was raging. Anyway Mr. Bridalvice apologised to Earl telling him he had forgotten

what time they were in, Earl did question that statement but was told to pay no mind. The new associates were not told what the positions entailed, but things would become clearer once they arrived at their destination.

Frank did not drive, his wife would not allow him to she was very suspicious of him, travelling arrangements were made. The men were to meet exactly two weeks from that day at the gas station on the corner of fifty third and Maine. They were then instructed to head north, driving at fifty five miles per hour keeping that speed for approximately one hour twelve minutes and not to stop for any reason what so ever.

So here they were Frank Walson and Earl Peppertree, dead on time at their destination. Frank was worried about the tie; Earl reassured him that Mr. Bridalvice wouldn't notice in the daylight. The two men were standing in the midday heat, outside a rundown diner; they could still make out the name RITA AND JOE'S FAMBLY RESTURAUNT. "I remember this place" Frank said with a nostalgic smirk on his face, "me and my folks used to come here all the time". Just as Frank continued to recollect his fond memories, a man appeared as if from thin air. Both Frank and Earl were shocked, Earl put his hand on his heart gasping for air, Frank was ready to collapse. "Please don't be alarmed gentlemen" boomed the recognisable voice. Frank's voice stuttered due to slight fear, "Mr.

## Writer's Corner

### Associates *continued from page 4*

Bridalvice I presume", "ah you two must be Frank and Earl" said Alexander. Alexander's gentle and wizened face quickly changed, becoming nasty and twisted. His voice becoming shrilled, now Frank and Earl had reason to be scared. "I specifically stated in the ad that you were both to wear a black suit". Alexander was full of rage by now. Frank butted in trying to explain the absence of his black tie. Alexander may have looked about a hundred, but when Frank spoke he rushed at him, claspings the tie in his scrawny yet nimble fingers.

Alexander tightened the knot, choking Frank. Earl stepped in but Alexander's scowling glare, was all that was needed to make Earl back away. Alexander then slit the tie with his razor like finger nail. Earl looked like a frightened rabbit; Frank was down on his hands and knees gasping for air.

Alexander seemed ready to commit homicide, but his face of rage changed to one of kindness and regret. "Please forgive my behaviour gentlemen", Alexander pleaded. "Just leave us alone" Earl said "just leave us alone". And

Alexander Harmonious Bridalvice did just that, leaving just as when he first appeared.

Earl and Frank didn't speak to each other, not during the journey to the gas station, or ever again. They greeted each other with a firm hand shake; Walter the taller of the two did not wear a tie. George being curious questioned the ties absence, "ah it'll be okay" Walter said. Mr. Bridalvice won't mind, "I hope not" said George. "I sure hope not".

*Alan Maguire*

### Simon

**S**imon says we're here to help  
**I**nvolve yourself in your future  
**M**ove on and up from here on in  
**O**ur services are here to help you  
**N**ow is the time to mould the new you

*Patrick Donoghue*

### Untitled

The welcome pack from Simon that you get when you arrive  
 Will probably be the first genuine welcome you have got in a while  
 The atmosphere is strange at first  
 As you try to work out what's behind the smile  
 But then it hits you  
 There is nothing to hide  
 These people really care and are genuine  
 You need it as part of your armour  
 Paranoia is just a trait from the street  
 'Cause it can cost you dearly to let your guard down  
 It pays to be paranoid if you live on the street

*Patrick Donoghue*

### A Sisters Thoughts

Many sleepless nights I had, when you were living on the streets  
 I know you think I didn't care but my sanity I had to keep  
 I tried and tried to help you, but it made no difference to you in the end  
 I did all I could do and left it up to you, but this wasn't as easy as it may seem...  
 It caused me so much pain but in the end you made it through yourself  
 So the pain was worth it

*Tommy*

### My Drinking

My drinking consumes me  
 It drives me insane  
 It eats at my life causing me and my family so much pain  
 It holds me back from the life I could live  
 It stops me giving things I want to give  
 To stay sober is my aim  
 Because this is my life and not a game

*Tommy*



## Cooking For One This Christmas

A common dilemma for many people living on their own is that they are often left to cook for themselves at Xmas so here are two recipes that are worth the effort, cost and time.

### Bacon Wrapped Chicken Breast



- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 x boneless chicken breast | 1 x onion                                |
| 1 x pack of streaky rashers | 1 x small bag of breadcrumbs             |
| 1 x gammon steak            | 1 x small bag of stuffing mix            |
| 4 x potatoes                | 1 x pack of stir in gravy                |
| 4 x carrots                 | Cooking oil                              |
| 1 x net of brussel sprouts  | 3 x tablespoons melted butter (optional) |

All can be bought in your local Dunne's Stores for under €12

#### METHOD

- 1 Pre heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4
- 2 To prepare the vegetables, peel and wash potatoes and carrots and remove the outer leaves on the sprouts. Dice the carrots and place in a pot of cold water and place sprouts in a pot of cold water also. Cut potatoes in quarters and place on a baking tray with a drizzle of oil, salt and pepper, and place on the middle shelf of the oven for 40 minutes or until golden brown
- 3 To prepare the meat, wrap the chicken breast with streaky bacon and place on tinfoil and make it into a loose parcel. Place on the top shelf of the oven 10 minutes after the potatoes have gone in (cooking time at least 25-30 mins see \* below)
- 4 To prepare the stuffing, finely chop an onion and add to the required amount of breadcrumbs, add in the prepared stuffing mix (as per instructions) and 3 teaspoons of cooking oil or the melted butter and mix until moist
- 5 Place in tin foil and place in the oven for 20 mins
- 6 Vegetables should be cooked for 20 – 25 mins in boiling water
- 7 Gammon steaks should be grilled for 7 mins each side
- 8 Finally mix gravy as per the instructions. Pour over your meal before serving and enjoy

\* **Important note:** Cooking times can vary; make sure your chicken is well cooked before serving (white all the way through).

### Fruit Trifle



- |                            |                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 x pack of sponge fingers | 1 x carton readymade custard |
| 1 x tin fruit cocktail     | ½ pint carton of fresh cream |
| 1 x pack of desired jelly  |                              |

#### METHOD

- 1 Break up sponge fingers into a bowl and add drained tin of fruit cocktail and mix well
- 2 Cut up the block of jelly into pieces and add 1 pint of boiling water and mix until the jelly has dissolved
- 3 Pour the jelly mix over the sponge and fruit mix and leave to cool for a while before placing in the fridge to set
- 4 Once the jelly has set and is firm to touch, pour the readymade custard over the top. Whisk the cream in a bowl and when it has thickened put it on top of the trifle and you are then ready to serve and enjoy!!

Recipes by Gavin Browne

## Competition

**Brighten up your Christmas and be in with a chance to win a €50 shopping voucher.**

All you have to do is answer the following question:

**Which is the missing plant from this tradition Christmas song? The Holly and the ...**

**A. Mistletoe B. Ivy C. Pine cone**

Send your answers to Simon Action and Involvement Group, Simon Communities of Ireland, 28-30 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2.

Closing date 31st of January 2011.

## Simon Voices Needs You!

We want to hear from you. Please send your personal stories, opinions, poems or news to: Simon Action and Involvement Group, c/o Catri O'Kane, Simon Communities of Ireland, St Andrew's House, 28 – 30 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 016711606

We may not be able to publish everything we receive. Thank you to everybody who has sent in a contribution. Sorry if it has not been included in this issue.