



CONTACT

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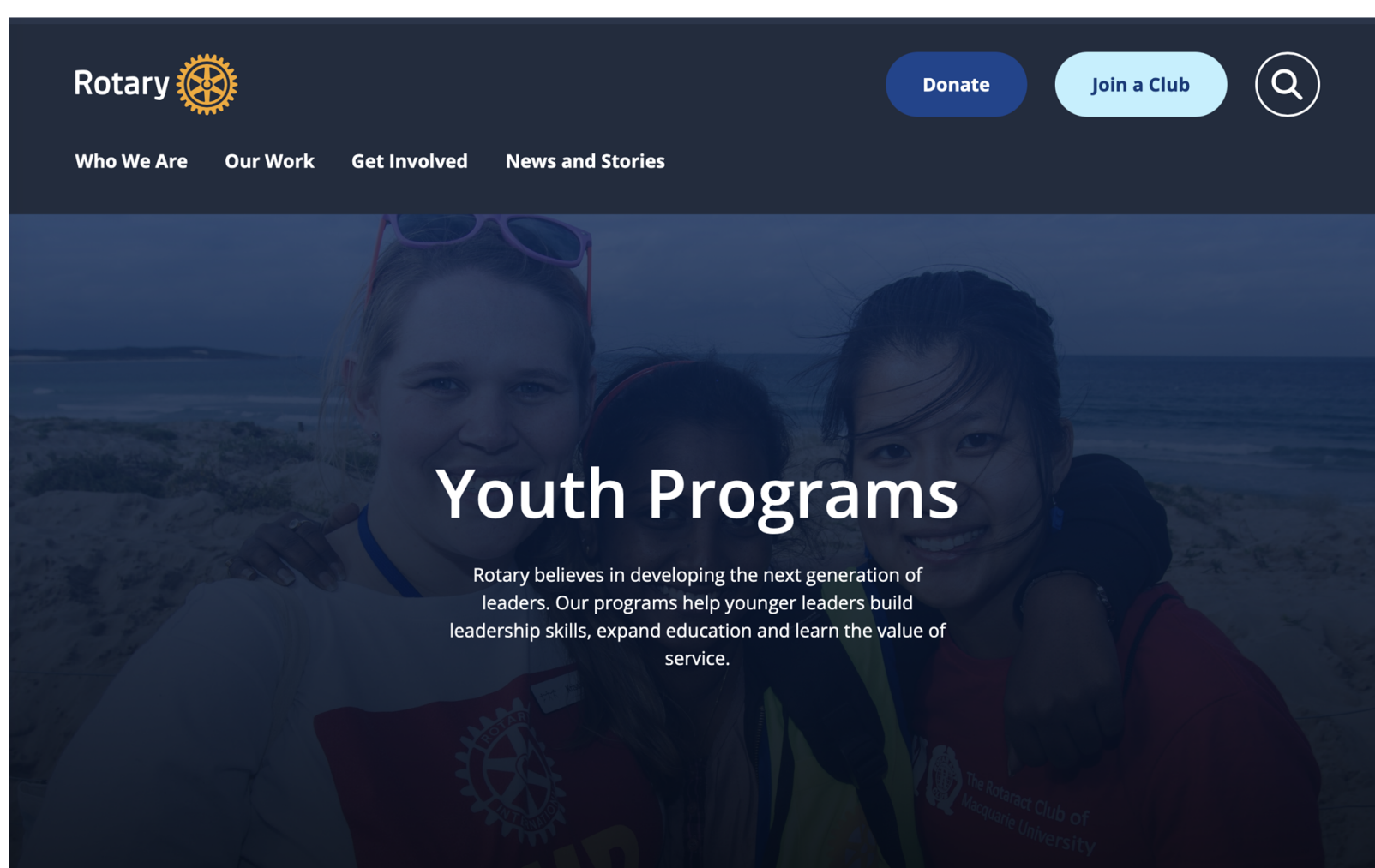
Date: 12 September 2026

President: Dennis Kosnar
Editor: on leave

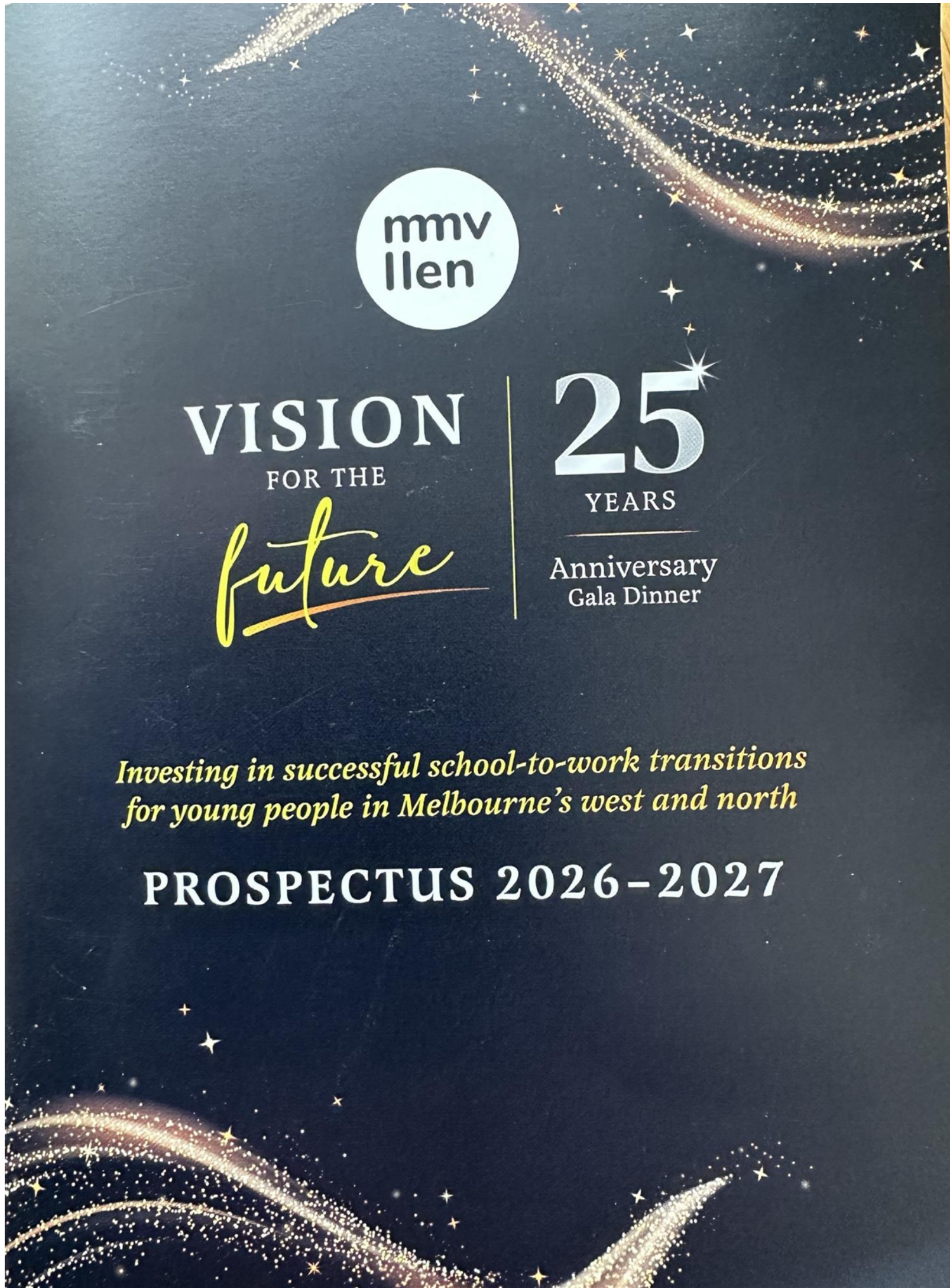
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With our editor on leave we depart from our usual format and bring news of an important local agency providing support for youth.

As you are aware Rotary is heavily involved with developing and supporting young people in education and their development. The Rotary Club of Essendon is proud, as one go its ongoing projects, to support [Youth Projects Ltd](#), a charity that provides front line support to open up pathways out of poverty and homelessness. We are active with RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards), NYSF (National Youth Science Forum) and in the past Rotary Youth Exchange whilst reciprocally hosting an overseas student.



We were therefore very receptive to the invitation to attend the 25 year gala anniversary of [mmvllen](#) (Marlbyrnong & Moonee Valley Local Learning & Employment Network), that bridges the gap between completion of schooling to training youth to gain access to employment.



What a wonderful gala night it was on Thursday 10th September. Over 300 guests gathered at Hyatt Place, Essendon Fields, to celebrate 25 years of service to youth by [mmvllen](#) and their vision for the future.



According to Chair Peter Harrison, mmvllen works at the intersection of education, industry and the community in the West and Northern Melbourne, to transition young people from school into employment and a brighter future, especially those that face barriers to education and employment from cultural and linguistic communities and those with a disability through their Youth Employment programme (YEPP). This is a major obstacle for many youth finishing school and finding a job which on average is over 10 months.

Over the 25 years they have worked with 20,000+ young people and achieved employment rates over 68% with their one-to-one mentoring and Try a Trade programme. Some 40+ local schools engaged with them which is a remarkable achievement. The trainees emerge more confident and feel better about themselves.

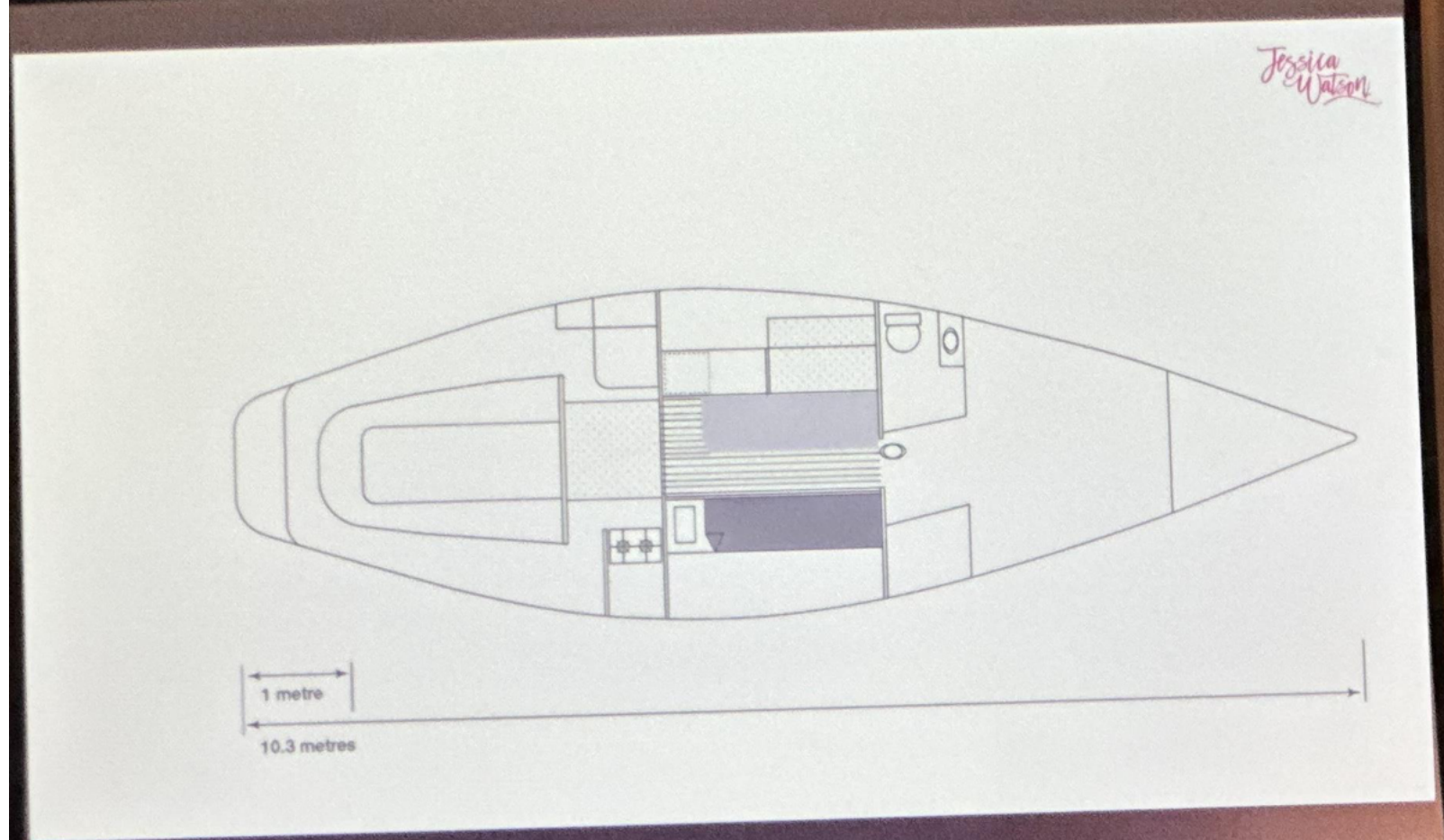
The Guest speakers were inspirational:

1. Mohamed Semra, the Mayor of Moonee Valley, an alumni of mmvllen, spoke about his racial discrimination at an Apple store and its subsequent world wide ramifications. He co-founded Endeavour Youth Australia to empower multicultural youth and was the 2005 Young Victorian of the Year.

Mohamed came to Australia as a refugee, but had no connections, no work experience. Mmvllen took him on exposing him to workplace opportunities and the rest is history.



2. Jessica Watson, who at the age of 16 was the youngest person to sail unassisted around the world. Video presentation of the rough and mountainous seas, the upturning of her boat 6 times and the broken mast was so inspiring. Her message was to have an ambition and aim for the sky. Jessica is expecting her first child and when asked if she would support her child risking the same adventure, as a mother was a little uncertain.



3. Ramada, a young lad from Palestine, arrived in Australia in 2004 and dreamed of being a footballer. He described how mmvllen helped him gain confidence and won a Football Victoria scholarship and a coaching role for 7 to 13 year old children with Juventus FC Academy.

4. Samira described her journey with her mentor from mmvllen assisting her to achieve the position of Projects Assistant with [MOVE Moonee Ponds](#). She has also been appointment to the Royal Life Saving Australia National Multicultural Communities Advisory Group.

There were two awards for high achievers, the Mitchell Celentano Trade Award with a grant to the recipient's vocational career path and the Sue Fowler Award recognising the person showing most commitment to mmvllen's vision.

Tim Cambell entertained us with his dynamic enthusiastic personality as MC. The 3-course dinner was up there to Hyatt's standards and drinks abundant.

This was also a fundraising event to carry mmvllen's vision into the next 25 years. It costs \$4,500 per student so money is needed as mmvllen is a non-government organisation. Their goal is to raise \$3,150,000 across 2026 - 2029.

To start proceedings, there was a complementary door prize, then raffle tickets, a very extensive silent auction and finally an invitation by River, with her husky soulful voice, for the honour of monetary pledges starting from \$45,000 and down.

The three fellow attendees from the Rotary Clubs of Flemington, Footscray and Essendon were quietly impressed with the energy and boisterousness of the night and agree that mmvllen deserves support to continue their ground-breaking activities.

A very enjoyable and informative night.

Upcoming Events

[Club Meeting](#)
Sep 15, 2026
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

[Club Meeting](#)
Oct 06, 2026
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

[Comedy for a Cause](#)
Oct 11, 2026
3:15 pm - 5:30 pm

[Club Meeting](#)
Oct 20, 2026
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

[View entire list](#)