

Western Australian Chrysanthemum Society Inc.



Oh, no it isn't!

NEWSLETTER May - June 2020

President's Notes

When I was at school and university I normally left my assignments to the last moment. Now that I am retired I have more time and so I have been writing these newsletters a few months in advance. As a result, a lot of the material that I wrote for this edition is no longer relevant to the current situation and has been omitted. Oh well, I guess that I can use it all next year, if I am still the President.

I hope that you received my President's Message regarding the cancellation of the Annual Show. As I said then, this is a great disappointment. However in the greater scheme of things '*Tis but a scratch*', as Monty Python's Black Knight remarked.

Of much greater importance is the health and well-being of all of us. I sincerely hope that none of our members will be afflicted by this virus. As others have observed, you start worrying about the elderly and then realise that you are one of them.

Looking for positives, I suppose that gardeners, and chrysanthemum growers in particular at this time of the year, are fortunate in having something enjoyable to do while our other activities are severely curtailed. You have to feel very sorry for people isolating in their high rise apartments or, worse still, inside berth ship's cabins.

Another positive is that the Editor's Notes are no more irrelevant now than when they were written, so they do not need to be altered. He has recently assailed me with another Tao Yuanming poem that will help you to think philosophically when you are out inspecting your plants in the midst of our current predicament.

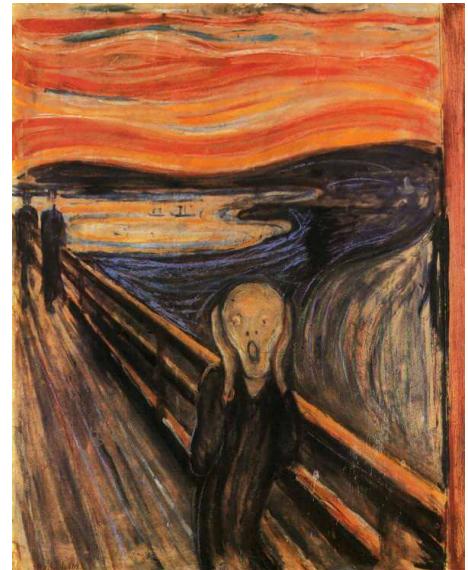


*The autumn chrysanthemums have the loveliest colours,
Flowers and leaves all moistened with the dew.
I drink this cup of all-forgetful wine,
And so drive all my earthly cares away.*

*Alone I lift the cup to my lips:
The wine is poured when the cup is empty.
And everything is silent at the setting of the sun;
Homing birds hurry to the woods singing.
Under the east balcony I shout boisterously:
I've found again the meaning of life.*

Unfortunately, this year my flowers are the worst that I have ever grown largely due to a plague of caterpillars resistant to multiple chemicals and uncontrolled by frequent opposition of finger and thumb. All up, resistant to every advantage bestowed upon mankind by evolution or learning. A bit like the coronavirus. Add to that, damage from the hottest April day on record, presumably due to anthropogenic global warming, and minor skirmishes with thrips, aphids and spider mites. So what can you expect?

I am a lifetime teetotaller, but I must confess that I did ask the shop assistant at the Chinese supermarket if she had any chrysanthemum wine when I was there to buy a bag of rice, which was sold out at Coles, along with all the flour, pasta, toilet paper



"Virtual" chrysanthemum show

Following an idea from John and Sue Morvell, member clubs of the Australian Chrysanthemum Council have agreed to hold a photographic chrysanthemum show. By now you should have received an email notification of the schedule and the rules to be followed. Basically there are classes for each of the Chrysanthemum Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 as well as for a vase of three blooms. Additionally, there are separate classes for Novice growers to make it attractive to all.

Each entry is to consist of three photographs showing the front, top and base of the exhibit. Up to three entries in each class are allowed. All entries are to be emailed to jsmorvell@gmail.com

Despite the fact that I have been appointed as the judge of the show, this is a great initiative and I encourage WACS members to participate.

What Are You Looking At?

All the colours of chrysanthemums are created from two main pigment types; anthocyanins (red) and carotenoids (yellow). A 2015 research paper¹ describes the presence of three different anthocyanins and seven different carotenoids found in chrysanthemum petals. The exact colour of any particular flower is determined by the amount of each of these pigments that is present. Unsurprisingly, pink flowers have anthocyanins and no carotenoids whereas the opposite is true for yellows. Salmon, bronze and orange flowers have good quantities of both, as do most reds. White chrysanthemums have negligible amounts of either pigment. Green flowers are the odd one out and occur due to the perpetuation of chlorophyll, which normally rapidly fades out of the petals. Green flowers commonly also have some carotenoids and, surprisingly, occasionally anthocyanins as well.

¹ *Molecules* **2015**, *20*, 11090-11102; doi:10.3390/molecules200611090

Some additional facts are of interest.

- There are three basic cell lines that make up the various parts of a chrysanthemum plant; referred to as L1, L2 and L3. Petals are composed only of the L1 (epidermal) and L2 (mesophyll) cell lines. The outer petal surfaces are derived from L1 and the inner portion from L2.
- Anthocyanins are only produced in the L1 surface layer whereas carotenoids can be produced in both the L1 (surface) and L2 (deep) layers.
- The petals of white chrysanthemums often open with a yellowish tinge due to the presence of carotenoids. However the yellow pigment is then destroyed by the action of an enzyme called carotenoid cleavage dioxygenase.
- Chrysanthemums are known to occasionally mutate to a different colour. A common mutation is where a white flower mutates to yellow. We are most familiar with Primrose Mount Shasta which arose in the front garden of Ron Seaton's home. These yellow "sports" occur due to a loss of the gene that produces carotenoid cleavage dioxygenase so that the yellow pigment in the petals is no longer destroyed. Observant growers will have noticed that for a short time after calyx split the buds of Mount Shasta and the Primrose sport are both pale yellow. The parent's petals fade to white whereas the sport remains pale yellow.
- Pale yellow flowers will usually be yellow in the L1 layer only, whereas dark yellow/gold flowers will have yellow pigment in both the L1 and L2 layers.
- Pink flowers may also mutate to show yellow pigment, in which case the flower will be bronze or salmon.
- As stated, red pigments (anthocyanins) are only produced in the outer L1 layer of petals. However, the L2 layer may be genetically pink. That is, genes for pink colour are present in the L2 layer but are not expressed. A white flower may sport pink if the genetic potential of the L2 layer is transferred to the L1 layer. This is the case with Kokka Shishi sporting to Kokka No Sachi and is also seen when some flowers of Kokka Shishi are part white and part pink.
- High temperatures and shading both reduce the production of anthocyanins.
- Some anthocyanin pigments are blue (delphinidin) but these are not naturally found in chrysanthemums (which have cyanidin – mostly pale pink to purplish-red, depending on the amount of pigment). However, genetic engineering has enabled the incorporation of genes that code for factors necessary for the production of blue anthocyanins into chrysanthemums, as revealed in an earlier newsletter.

Cultural Notes

With the plants approaching full bloom there are few tips that will make much difference now. However, it is vital to keep the plants properly watered; neither too much nor too little.

Check your flowers against the pot labels to prevent mistakes carrying over to next season. If you are growing multiple pots of any cultivar then mark the ones with the best flowers so that you can propagate from those next season.

Even though there is no show it is worth having a look at the Show Schedule and deciding which classes you could have entered with the good blooms that you have. Make a list of the cultivars in each Section that are at show standard and how many blooms you have of each. If you come up short of blooms for the classes that you would like to have entered then remember to make a list so that you can obtain some extra cultivars at the Distribution Day in October. In addition you may need to grow more pots of some of the most useful exhibition cultivars. This is a sure fire method of growing more plants than you are able to manage, so be careful. The late Ted Elms recommended that growers concentrate their efforts on the best show cultivars and grow the others that they liked for garden decoration.

While checking your blooms you can do a bit of tidying up, if necessary, by removing any old or malformed petals from the base of the bloom. If you wish to have a few vases around the house, authorities recommend picking blooms in the early morning or late evening. Make sure that you do not cut the stems too short. To maximise vase life of blooms after cutting, strip off the lower leaves, make a vertical cut in the base of the stem to aid water penetration and then plunge them immediately into deep cool water. Some growers put chicken wire in the bottom

of their buckets to hold the stem securely. Once the bucket is filled take it to a cool spot indoors as soon as possible. Individual blooms can be taken out and tidied up later, if it is thought to be desirable to do so.

Once the flowering season is finished remove any covers from the plants to improve air movement and light during winter. Cut back the main stems to about 25cm and trim any basal growths close to the soil to encourage dormancy. In our climate there is no hurry to do this as the weather will normally be quite good for another few weeks. Any smaller plants that you need cuttings from next season may be best left with some good foliage intact to encourage some more basal growth to develop before dormancy.

Give the plants a spray of pesticide and fungicide and put out some snail pellets. Some growers advocate fertilising the plants throughout winter to ensure vigorous sucker growth for cuttings. I cannot give any personal advice on this but if you have held back fertiliser after colour show then the soil will be low in vitality and it seems not unreasonable to give it a bit of a boost.

Here are some photos of just a few things that can go wrong when engaging in the gentle art of chrysanthemum growing.²



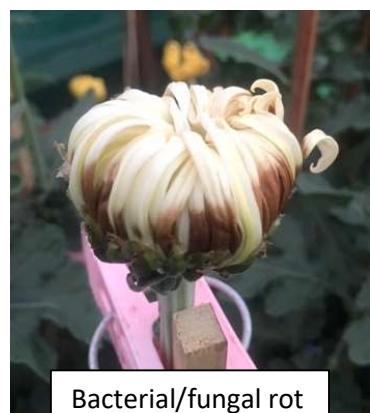
39.5 degree sun burn



Spider mite



caterpillars



Bacterial/fungal rot

I guess things could be worse.



Waters Turn to Blood
Exodus 7:14-25



Amphibians (Frogs)
Exodus 7:26-8:11



Gnats (Lice)
Exodus 8:12-15



Flies
Exodus 8:16-28



Disease on Livestock
Exodus 9:1-7



Unhealable Boils
Exodus 9:8-12



Hail and Fire
Exodus 9:13-35



Locusts
Exodus 10:1-20



Darkness
Exodus 10:21-29



Death of First-Born
Exodus 11:1-12:36

² Fortunately only two of these photographs are of my flowers. A trouble shared is a trouble halved, or double trouble?

³ Apologies to John Philpot Curran.

Chrysanthemum Breeding

At the end of the season you will find some small flowers appearing at the bottom of the plants. These are seldom useful for home or garden decoration but can be used for breeding. Western Australia has two breeders of international renown and while you may not wish to produce a hundred or more registered cultivars there is nothing to stop you trying for one. This year I grew a couple of garden beds of plants that were surplus to my exhibition needs and there is no reason why these beds could not have been filled with seedlings instead.

Cascades, Charms and Singles are the easiest to breed, as pollen is usually easy to find and the bees will do the pollinations for you if you wish. A greater chance of getting worthwhile seed is by isolating some flowers in bags and transferring pollen between plants chosen for the characteristics that you want to pass on. Most chrysanthemum flowers are incapable of self-pollination, so that is one thing you do not need to be worried about.

For the other Sections it is often difficult to locate the pollen and pistils. This is a link to the “Raising New Chrysanthemums” section of the very useful “Chrysanthemums in Aberdeen” website of Paul Barlow that outlines the techniques required.

<http://www.chrysanthemums.info/breeding/breeding.htm>

Floral Art

Many of our members enjoy Floral Art. For the purpose of exhibition these are divided into two sections; Formal and Informal Floral Art. It is important to remember that these are floral art and not exhibition bloom classes. As such, artistic and technical excellence in the arrangement of blooms (Formal Floral Art) or blooms, foliage and accessories (Informal Floral Art) is the most important consideration when it comes to judging. Bloom quality, especially freshness, is also important but to a lesser degree.

The Western Australian Horticultural Council’s Gardener’s Handbook (“the Green Book”) provides some guidance on the judging considerations. This is available at the WAHC website.

<https://horticulturalcouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Gardeners-Handbook.pdf>

If you are interested, you can find a number of original Japanese manuscripts on ikebana flower arranging principles at the Smithsonian Institution website.

<https://library.si.edu/subjects/flower-arrangement-japanese>

It is believed that the painter Sōami (? - 1525), a contemporary and friend of Shogun Yoshimasa (1436 - 1490), conceived the idea of representing the three elements of heaven, human, and earth in flower arrangements, from which have grown the principles of ikebana arrangements used today. It was at Yoshimasa's Silver Pavilion in Kyoto, where the art of cha-no-yu, the tea ceremony, and ko-aware, the incense ceremony, are said to have been evolved that the art of ikebana received its great development. Ikebana, incense appreciation and the tea ceremony are counted as the three classical Japanese arts of refinement.⁴



Origami chrysanthemum

With enforced isolation you might like to try your hand at something creative. This YouTube clip shows a method for creating folded paper chrysanthemum flowers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAOjxkRHOn4>

⁴ Thanks to Wikipedia for this information. The representation of heaven, human and earth is also the basis for the three flowered Japanese Sanbon Jitate style of potted chrysanthemum plant.

Vale – WACS Life Member Roy Shilling

Roy Shilling was an active member of The Western Australian Chrysanthemum Society for well over thirty years. At the same time he was a long time President and active member of the Gosnell's Horticultural Society. His contribution has enabled chrysanthemum growers in WA to have the opportunity of showing their blooms in two shows each year. Roy, and his late wife Ann, were always available to undertake duties to enable shows to take place. He also provided support in WA for horticultural activities and encouraged affiliation with The Western Australian Horticultural Council Inc. as a delegate to the council.

Roy and Ann were willing participants in the social and cultural side of the WA Chrysanthemum Society's activities. All members were regularly invited to their home and Chrysanthemum shed to enjoy each other's company, talk about the growing of Chrysanthemums and of course have a cuppa. Their conviviality was always greatly appreciated. Roy always went out of his way to assist other and new growers as well as promote the growing of chrysanthemums in WA.

As a quality grower of many categories of chrysanthemums, Roy demonstrated his skills by winning the Australian Chrysanthemum Championship in Adelaide in 1988, being the first Western Australian grower to achieve this feat, and won it again in Perth in 2005. Hardly a year has passed without Roy winning key sections of show schedules and producing Champion Blooms. Roy won five WA State A Championships and nine State B Championships, as well as staging the Best Exhibit of the WACS Show on four occasions and Grand Champion Bloom on eight. Especially in the area of growing Singles Cuts and Show Singles, Roy was a master.

About twenty years ago Roy introduced the growing of Spray Chrysanthemums for exhibition in shows. He arranged for stock of recognised Spray Chrysanthemums to be sent from the UK. The growing of sprays also spread to other states. Through experimental growing Roy successfully adapted the process of growing sprays to suit our climate. With this he also ensured that notes on the growing of Sprays are available in WA.

This is but a brief glance at the huge contribution Roy has made to the growing of chrysanthemums across Australia and particularly in Western Australia. We acknowledge Roy's great contribution over a long period of time.



Frank Blackwell

Potted Plants



I came across this reproduction of a historical hand coloured black and white photograph. Apart from being very pretty it got me thinking. The olden day flower shows often featured chrysanthemums in pots. While we have classes for Charms and Cascades in pots as well as Bonsai, Daruma and Fukusuke we have no specific classes for plants like those shown above. However, there is the Special Display class and some members will recall seeing Ralph Coombes' large plant of Seatons Ruby exhibited some years back which was very impressive.

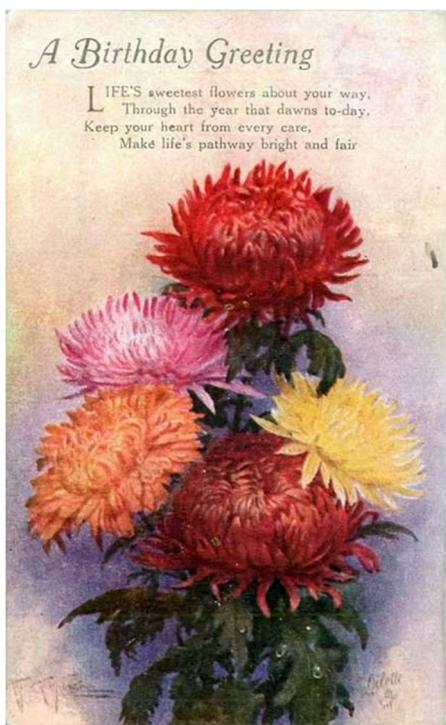
You may be interested to read Thomas Pockett's essay, dated 8th December 1896, on growing large specimen plants in twelve inch pots which can be found at -

<http://www.chrysanthemums.info/TWPessay/twpex1.htm>

The notes say that between 38 and 56 blooms can be grown on each plant and recommend a spacing of four feet between the pots and six feet between the rows. Following that recommendation would allow me to grow twelve plants in my shadehouse. I currently have 180 pots growing for show blooms. Maybe that is why the enthusiasm for growing specimen plants has declined.

Editor's Notes

By now I am sure that you are all big fans of chrysanthemum art and poetry. Combining the two gives us these attractive birthday cards.



If you wish to have art featuring a fan and a chrysanthemum then this Christmas card is the one for you.

Here is another artwork with a fan and chrysanthemums. As I indicated in an earlier newsletter, Pierre-Auguste Renoir was big on chrysanthemums.



It has been suggested by some that chrysanthemums are only of interest to older people. Bah humbug to that! This is an artwork in the Japanese anime style which is especially popular with some of the young. This youthful chrysanthemum fan may turn out to be a fine grower and judge of chrysanthemums, or perhaps follow in the footsteps of Piet Mondrian and study individual flowers in an attempt to reveal their hidden inner beauty. Blue chrysanthemums will likely be commonplace when he is my age.

OK, I know that you are just busting for some more haiku. This is a website devoted to the art form.

<http://chevrefeuillescarpediem.blogspot.com/2012/10/carpe-diem-15-chrysanthemum.html>

The site has some chrysanthemum related haiku from our dear old friend Matsuo Basho (1644-1694). You will remember him from the “frog jumps in” haiku. These are “very Zen”⁵, so even though they are only three lines long you have to take time in contemplation when reading them. I have provided the original Japanese-Latin (Romanji) versions first so you can see the 5, 7, 5 syllable pattern and also in case you want to brush up on your Japanese in the off season while waiting to take your next lot of cuttings.

shira giku no
me ni katete miru
chiri mo nanshi

*white chrysanthemum:
gazing closely,
not a speck of dust*

kasa no to ya
higurete kureshi
kiku no sake

*grass-thatched hut -
as day darkens I'm given
chrysanthemum wine*

kangiku ya
amazake tsukuru
mado no saki

*winter chrysanthemum -
heating sweet wine
in front of the window*

Modern living does not allow time for a lot of contemplation so I have updated these haiku to make them more relevant to the modern world.

White chrysanthemum:
I much prefer dyed blue ones,
Twelve dollars for five

Four bed two bath house –
As day darkens I turn on
Screen and watch Netflix

Winter chrysanthemum –
Tweeting and Instagramming,
In front of the mirror

I also found yet another Matsuo Basho haiku. I have unashamedly robbed it of its historical significance by altering the time of year from spring to autumn in order to make it relevant to the end of the chrysanthemum season.⁶

Autumn is passing by!
Birds are weeping and the eyes
Of fish fill with tears.



⁵ When passing time in the off-season (or during lockdown) please be advised that you cannot use “zen” in Scrabble.

⁶ Literature scholars and book club aficionados, in particular, will be interested to know that Basho embarked on several major journeys during his lifetime. In the book “The Narrow Road to Oku” he recounts setting off in springtime on a long and dangerous journey, travelling 2450km by foot in 150 days, *drifting with the clouds and streams and lodging under trees and on bare rocks*. He farewelled his friends not knowing how long it would be before, or indeed if, he would see them again. His description of his feelings at the time was- *I stood at the crossway of parting in this dreamlike existence and wept tears of farewell*. He then composed this spring-time haiku before setting off.

Mentors

Ian Blackwell – Kelmscott 9390 2608
Ralph Coombes – Maida Vale 9454 3373
Michael Drake-Brockman – Pickering Brook 9293 7650
Ralph Foster – Armadale 9497 2420
Carl Slusarczyk – Mount Lawley 9272 1356
Richard Williams – Inglewood 0439 103 500

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Secretary – Michael Drake-Brockman 9293 7650 (H) michaeldb@iinet.net.au
Newsletter Editor – Carl Slusarczyk 9272 1356 (H) carl.lina.slu@gmail.com (*all contributions gratefully received*)

Forthcoming Events



Annual General Meeting – 12 noon Tuesday 8th September, John McGrath Pavilion.

WA Horticultural Council Garden Clubs' Fair – Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th September 2020, South Perth Community Centre, corner of South Tce and Sandgate St, South Perth.

WACS Distribution Day – 1.30pm Sunday 25th October, John McGrath Pavilion.

Website

www.chrysanthemumwa.com

Facebook Page

Western Australian Chrysanthemum Society

www.facebook.com/groups/chrysanthemumwa/

But wait, there's more.

The President has kindly mentioned that my Notes are no more irrelevant now than they were before. We all need a challenge. The following has nothing at all to do with chrysanthemums.

I like to listen to music via YouTube while surfing the net for interesting snippets to add to the Notes. Given the absence of much else to do in the current situation may I recommend that you have a good look at YouTube. There is just about everything there that you could wish for, regardless of your musical preferences. Get some headphones so that you do not inflict your tastes on everyone else⁷ in the home.



⁷ Perhaps I should follow my own advice.

I came across this collaboration between Luciano Pavarotti and Boyzone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xB070dbYdpw>

Not what you might expect but, according to Wikipedia, Pavarotti did a number of concerts in collaboration with Pop stars and groups. These concerts were called “Pavarotti & Friends” and were held between 1992 and 2003 in his home town of Modena, Italy. Proceeds from the events were donated to humanitarian causes including the international aid agency War Child and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He was criticised for this by some devotees of classical music. However Pavarotti responded to the critics saying: *Some say the word pop is a derogatory word to say 'not important'—I do not accept that. If the word classic is the word to say 'boring', I do not accept. There is good and bad music.*

The Three Tenors were also criticised for “Pop-ularising” classical music. Jose Carreras also did collaborations with other artists. I like this solo and duet with the Norwegian Sissel Kyrkjebø.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-DXVWzpp9M>

Some of these classical music devotees also bemoan the absence of great musicians, in the mould of Mozart and Beethoven, in the modern world. These famous composers were skilled in the composition of music arising from a small theme and then expanding it with multiple improvisations and recapitulations, using changes of speed and volume to create light and shade. Additionally the critics decry the lack of technical excellence of many Pop musicians in comparison to classically trained performers. I feel sure that Pavarotti would say that this Mark Knopfler live performance was good music. You may care to answer the question: Are drummers really musicians?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klufLA7Bx2Q>

Mark Knopfler also did collaborations with other artists. I like the ones with Willy DeVille.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOAx-iL6Clw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQR3hqqcTt0>

Unfortunately for him, Willy was a heroin addict. Symptoms of heroin withdrawal include increased sweating and tearing and a runny nose. I am sure that you can spot the signs in this raw live performance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJtE-MHzKYY>

The more refined original studio version of the song is found at this link but it does not have the acoustic guitar solo.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJBRhPcQ_9c

If you like acoustic guitar and mixed up shook up girls then this will song from Alizée will appeal.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xq-aTe77bkA>

We are assured that we will cross the bridge to better times. This Seekers song explores a similar theme.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QeEG38iUe5U>

If you like this theme and Sissel Kyrkjebø then try this.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PK-NZc4O6mA>

Nessun Dorma is Luciano Pavarotti’s best known song. This rendition is by Jussi Björling who Pavarotti admired most of all the tenors. Björling was an alcoholic and died at the age of forty nine. Willy DeVille made it to fifty eight.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xT09SI0LAjg>

Finally, another Mark Knopfler live performance. This one from Sydney in 1986, very different from the first one.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=im2SoltmZEc>

In the Comments attached to this recording znnibgky writes - *during the war in Bosnia I was listening this song and helped me to mentally survive horror in Sarajevo. This man and his band didn't save my life but they definitely saved my soul. Always grateful.*

Good music; Mozart, Beethoven and Knopfler.

Stay safe.