

REAL  
READING  
NO GOSSIP

# life etc

JUST THE THINGS THAT MATTER

## FIRSTS AFTER 40

Readers tell how they  
made 40 their lucky number

A TREE CHANGE  
to wine country

# Breathe easy

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new life in Tasmania

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A grand tale of love  
from Croppa Creek

SPOTLESS  
STAIN-BUSTING  
BY SHANNON LUSH

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## ESCAPE

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72 HOURS IN MARGARET RIVER

## MAKE TIME FOR GOOD READING WITH

- > NORMAN SWAN
- > RICHARD GLOVER
- > MARGARET POMERANZ



## ANDREW KLEIN: Recovered lawyer

**H**e was a lawyer “and then got better”. It’s a great line and that’s what Andrew Klein, corporate entertainer/team builder/MC, specialises in.

But Klein is at pains to emphasise he’s not a comedian, even though his father-in-law, puzzled by what he does, says “he’s really like a clown” (cue Hungarian accent).

He was motivated to do law, Klein says, “without any real knowledge of what it was to work in a big law firm. It was based on I don’t know what: television, films, a love of public speaking and debating.”

He finished his studies (the arts and drama components were his “saviour”) and then did his due diligence, working at the Federal Court of Australia and a major law firm.

“I hated law from day one,” he admits. “I literally would have a headache every Sunday night contemplating my week.”

Klein resigned from the law firm and, looking for a job that would tie him over until he found his true vocation in life, agreed to help a friend promote his cake delivery business in the city.

“I resigned on the Friday and on the Monday found myself in a big chef’s hat handing out leaflets in Martin Place,” says Klein.

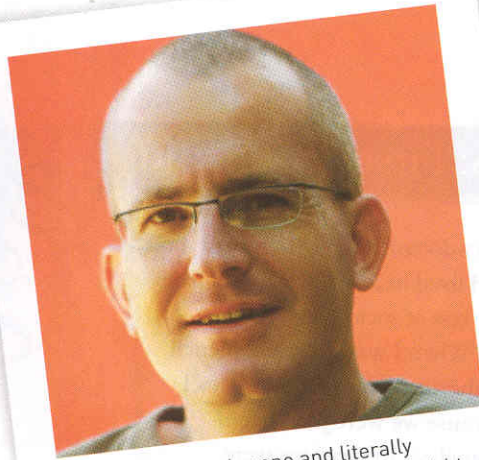
A stint at the Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW working as a legal policy officer followed. Though more enjoyable, that didn’t excite him, either.

His wife issued a challenge: do what you really love to do. Says Klein, “I kept coming back to how much I loved running camps as a youth leader.

“My friend Darren Eisenberg was a school teacher who was very passionate about his profession but was at a similar place as me, wanting to do something different.

“We decided our criteria were not to wear a suit, to have fun and to somehow use our acting and speaking abilities.”

The pair created Impact Entertainers to develop and run high school study skills seminars and corporate team-building and conference events. “The study skills seminars were initially our bread and butter and I think



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we were a breath of fresh air to kids used to being taught in a very dry way,” says Klein.

They started trivia nights at inner-city pubs “where a lot of professionals would go for a drink” and the idea of leading corporate conferences grew from there.

“I knew from my experience that corporate events tended to be based on very boring PowerPoint presentations,” says Klein. “We introduced audience involvement. We could see that the same type of thing that appeals to nine- and 13-year-olds appeals to 40-year-olds.”

In fact, he claims, the more conservative the industry, the more workers embrace “being a kid”. Many of Impact’s clients are in banking, finance and law and have included the Commonwealth Bank, Ernst & Young, Mayne Health Optus, Telstra and ABN AMRO.

“We run events the same way we’d run a camp of 13-year-olds. We conduct quizzes, treasure hunts, give groups cameras and have them travel around taking pictures of members of their team doing various things.

“The main activity we do is give them a digital movie camera and they write and direct a movie about their company. Some do the murder mystery version, others the horror, others Jerry Springer. Then we have an Oscars night.

“We do a lot of research beforehand to learn about particular personalities.”



Klein can get a whole auditorium of over 500 people to their feet, “invoking the spirit of Jerry Springer” while stamping and shouting their company accountant’s name. “When people are energised, they’re learning more,” he says.

Klein is just 40 and has made his mark in another field but he knows how a mortgage and parental responsibilities can provide a reality check to those who contemplate a brand new life.

He says he undertook his career change before he had children and that it would be much harder to face school fees and house repayments while starting out in a new industry. On the other hand, he could now be sitting in his partner’s office at the big law firm trying to find a corporate MC to entertain and motivate the troops.

He much prefers what he is today.

— JUDY FRIEDLANDER

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