

DHSESA - Newsletter

Number 17

AUTUMN 1998

DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL EX-STUDENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

FORTY (AND MORE) YEARS ON

by **MARGOT
TITCHER**
(1944-1948)

'We'll honour yet the school we knew'.

But would they? During the countdown to November 29th, the day set aside for the reuniting of pupils who attended DHS in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, the question predominated.

The small band of fewer than 20 exies led by an executive committee of three, had laboured throughout the year, with the assistance of members of the DHS Ex-students Association, and of Robin Stevenson - Deputy Principal, to ensure a successful outcome.

A collection of early photographs and Dandenong Historical displays were in readiness, signs drawn, registration points designated, registrars rostered.

Would the formal invitations, the word of mouth publicity, the media coverage, spark enthusiasm? Would the unpredictable Spring weather keep people away? Would it be too hot, too wet, too chilly? Had the Chaplaincy Committee, in charge of refreshments, over-catered? Under-catered? What if ...?

But they did arrive. They streamed through the gates, hundreds of

them. They had made their way to the old school from all points of the compass, on foot, by car, by plane, from local homes, from distant parts of regional Victoria, from interstate.

Left behind were day-to-day adult anxieties, financial stresses, broken relationships, unrealized ambitions. It was a day to return to childhood. Old mates were



BARRY SIMON

sought out, friendships renewed, confidences shared, schooldays hilariously revisited.

There were those who cupped an ear to hear or conversed from wheelchairs, some who knew they would not see another reunion. To the white-haired, the slightly stouter, the rather frail, it mattered

little: they were youngsters again as they reminisced.

Long-dead teachers were called to mind: 'Brum', Miss Carpenter and her fingernail inspections, 'Toss' McCaughtrie with his 'Write out one hundred thirteen-letter Latin words for talking'. And everybody had an 'Old Sinny' tale to relate. Overheard: 'Geoff, you were my heart-throb'. Congratulations, Geoff, you handled it superbly with your gentle smile and charming 'Why didn't you tell me?'. How many small dramas were being played out within the throng?

Men were crushing women to their chests and women were planting multi-colored kisses upon each other's cheeks in genuine affection. For a brief spell, everybody felt loved.

It was undoubtedly 'a great day and a jolly day'.

Above the school songs, the rowdy chatter, the whoops of recognition, a sound drifted - a creaking sort of noise. Did anybody present hear it?

The old school, 'the best school of all', clearly recognizable despite the many facelifts, was squaring her shoulders and raising high her head in pride. She had watched the crowds of sixty-plus, former students filing into the grounds: they had, every one, remembered her.

NOTE: PHOTOS INSIDE!

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Noticed at DHS on November 29th 1997



Alan Corrigan and Henry Drake
See story next page



Max Wenn, Reg Campbell and Frank Secomb



Les Monoffi, Trevor Grigg and Alex Burgess

CHAPLAINCY CONTINUES AT DHS

The admirable tradition of pastoral care for our school community continues following the Commissioning Service held during 1997 at the school.

Mr Ed Eadon brings to the position of Chaplain, qualifications in the form of Diploma of Ministries from the Adelaide College of Ministries, S.A., and a Post Graduate Diploma Pastoral Counselling from Kingsley College, Glenroy. Ed previously held employment with the State Bank of Victoria, Box Hill Youth Services, Commonwealth Employment Centre - Box Hill and Youth Development worker/Counsellor - Manningham Youth Services. His Youth Work portfolio includes Youth Leader at Mitcham Baptist Church, Youth Leader at Frankston Forest Baptist Church, Youth Pastor - Bethel Baptist Church, S.A., and at the time of his appointment he was attending Truth Liberation and Concern.

This wide diversity would appear to amply qualify him to assume the challenging role filled competently by successive Chaplains at DHS. Among those participating in the Commissioning service were Mrs Vicki Collier, Chairperson of the Dandenong Chaplaincy Committee, Mr Neil Vague, a long term member of that Committee, Mrs Delwynne Wright, SWC, Dandenong High School, plus a former Chaplain, Megan Coote, now the Chaplain's Chaplain to the auspicing body, the Council for Christian Education in Schools. Members of the Minister's fraternal were present, the Guest Speaker was the Reverend Barrie Sutton, Chaplain - Victorian Cricket Team. The School Concert Band,

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co-ordinated by Katrina Vrisk, together with the School's Home Economics Class, contributed to a successful late afternoon function.

FROM THE CHAIR

I have recently had cause to reflect on the state of the present incarnation of the Association. We evolved out of the organising Committee for the 70th Anniversary and became operational in 1992.

Since then we have initiated decade reunions for various year levels; more than a dozen in number. We took responsibility for much of the organisation of the 75th Anniversary, and last year a special reunion was held for past pupils of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.

Our connection with the school over these years has been close and co-operative. Ex-students regularly attend assemblies on occasions such as anniversaries, Anzac Day, Awards Night and Presentation of School Badges. The Association, and its members, have set up a number of scholarships for students - the most recent being the Edna Dawson Vukmirovic Music Scholarship.

Through our initiative, school badges have been reproduced, and last year House Captain and School Captain badges were ordered, ready for presentation this year.

New House Banners were created for the 75th anniversary and two art exhibitions of ex-student works have been held. The recording of school songs in 1996 was an important and memorable undertaking.

Ideas and projects envisioned during the first meetings in 1992 have gradually taken shape. The

Association Newsletter was the first thing off the ground and it has developed and improved over the years. The History Unit was set up a few years ago and is functioning well. Its members catalogue and store archival material in a custodial role for the school community. At present a group of regional contacts is being organized in country Victoria and inter-state, and someone has agreed to take responsibility for developing a business network of ex-students.

ALL THIS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED WITH VOLUNTARY LABOUR.

The ideas have always been there: it is just a matter of finding the person power to run with them. The main problems we have encountered have been too few helpers for too many jobs. Of great concern has been the ever fluctuating numbers of members: we have surges at reunions and then numbers drop off.

It has been suggested that members might want more for their \$10 a year, that we should entice them with discounts and privileges. I find this notion somewhat disturbing. It may well be part of modern practice but then I find much of modern practice offensive. **The crunch for me is the question of giving or taking. To misquote President Kennedy - "Ask not what your Association can do for you, but what you can do for your Association."** That sentiment is consistent with the school spirit engendered over the decades.

However, we are still saddled with the numbers problem and we are in the run-up to the 80th Anniversary celebrations. **I would therefore appreciate comments and suggestions on these matters, so please write.**

Greta Jungwirth

NEWS PARS

'The Barwon Grange' in Fernleigh Street, Newtown, Geelong, is an elegant, intact brick home, built in 1855, which has been restored and authentically furnished by its owners, the National Trust Of Australia (Victoria). It is now the home of **Jennifer Bantow (formerly Cummings)**. Jennifer and her husband Ray have the stewardship of this interesting architectural icon, and visitors are welcome.

Lorraine Metcalfe (formerly Vincent), has authored a book to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Dandenong Festival of Music and Art for Youth. It has been written as a tribute to the artists, committee members, teachers, adjudicators and volunteers who have participated in its presentation over time. Copies of the book can be purchased, with full proceeds going to the Festival, by phoning Lorraine on 03 9704 7938.

Making news lately was Dandenong Fire Brigade member **Rick Owen**, who for the second time at a CFA demonstration, has won the one man marshall event, confirming his position as State Champion. Rick praised his teammates, recalling that Dandenong competed at five recent demonstrations, winning five aggregates, and bringing home some great trophies.

Helen Katsos was recently married to Jim Liapis in Dandenong. Helen was a student, (1985-1987), later a teacher at DHS in Maths and Science, and recently she has been engaged in the positions of treasurer and functions co-ordinator of our Ex-students Association. Congratulations Helen and Jim.

MAYOR RETURNS TO DHS



City of Casey Mayor, Wayne Smith, and Heatherton Ward councillor, Sam Afra, unleashed their musical talents on unsuspecting Dandenong High School Students during the donation of a \$1000 cheque to the school's Edna Dawson Vukmirovic Music Scholarship on Friday.

Wayne Smith, formerly a Councillor with the City of Cranbourne, has just completed his year as the first Mayor of the City of Casey, a city with a population of 155,000. Wayne, who has had a long interest in community affairs, resigned his position as a teacher, and proprietor of his own photography business, to take on the position in a full time capacity. Congratulations Wayne!

Sue Jarvis has added to her already high reputation by winning the Best Exhibit at the 1997 Yakkerboo Festival Art Show.

With the kind permission of 86 year old ex-student, Mr **Henry Drake**, we publish, *in toto*, his letter, recently received by the President **Greta Jungwirth (formerly de Vries)**. "I am now in my 87th year and I still hold fond recollections of my days at DHS (1922-1928). My close associate was **Alan Corrigan**. We shared the same desk for several years and I was 1st in form for 3 years. I still have my prize books 'Pickwick Papers' (Dickens) and 'Arabian Nights'. My first year prize 'Greek Myths' I have donated to the school library.

I pushed a bicycle from near Sandown Park (Lawn Road) for 5 years, (wore out numerous chains and sprocket wheels!) as I had to negotiate the steep incline between the creek and Dandenong Road. They were great days followed by my appointment as a Junior Teacher at Clayton State School for 2 years at the conclusion of which I joined my father who with a partner operated a furniture manufacturing business employing about 20 people.

I gained proficiency in wood machining and cabinet making, made most of my own furniture for our home and raised 3 healthy children, a daughter and two sons. The advent of the last war meant that we lost skilled tradesmen and the difficulties of recruiting new workers brought about the closure of our operations in 1949. My father retired and with the help of my wife we took over a hardware store which we operated very successfully in Carlton. We now live a quiet retired life and I can always find something interesting to do in my workshop - my neighbours call me "MR FIXIT"!

Alan and I still keep in touch from time to time".

Editors Note - **Alan Corrigan** attended the most recent Reunion, and can still be seen at stock and land auctions in the Dandenong and Cranbourne districts.

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"...an organiser somewhere..."

With most of our ex-students spread widely across Australia and overseas, the task of getting our message to them becomes something of a challenge, particularly when special events are in the wind.

Although our Association membership is at a healthy level, most DHS ex-students/teachers are still non-members or remain unlocated, and many of them are probably keen to locate some of their peers and friends of yesteryear.

For this reason, and to blow some fresh breezes across the ex-student landscape, your committee wants to set up a simple support system to help our alumni in all areas to trace and maintain contact with each other.

Our goal is to appoint some **regional representatives** - locally, interstate, and overseas; existing members who would act as contact points for the Association on an informal and voluntary basis.

As a job advertisement, it might read something like this:

The Task: Is to act as an informal contact point in your own area for ex-students and ex-teachers of DHS; decide ways and means (if OK with the Committee) to achieve this; help to spread the word about reunions or activities being run by the Association; arrange occasional get-togethers for alumni in your area. not too much time or effort (we wouldn't ask you to do something we can't); hopefully, a job to be shared with one or two others in your region; lots of encouragement and support from the main Committee; someone interested in DHS and its people, both past and present; No "Superpersons" needed here - just an interest in the task and satisfaction in doing it; a financial member of the Ex-students' Association.

The Commitment: Naturally, the level of success we have in making this concept work will depend on the degree of response from you, our members. Already several people have put up their hands to offer support within Victoria, with other offers in the wind.

The Support: With 1999 being the 80th Anniversary, (probably in March), and **80th Anniversary:** you small band of Committee members about to get into 'battle mode', we need as much help as we can muster throughout this year.

We need your ideas, your suggestions, and your support in general. With your help, we can achieve our goals. So, why not become a '**Regional Rep.**' for the Association? Or, persuade a friend to do so if you cannot.

If you would like more information before committing yourself, please contact us as follows:

In writing to:

Phone:

The President, Ex-Students' Association. (Marked 'Regional Reps.')

OR

Greta Jungwirth or Robyn Browne - (numbers available on request from DHS office staff).

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU !!

BULLETIN BOARD

"FABER QUISQUE FORTUNAE"
-SONGS OF DANDENONG HIGH
SCHOOL'

CD STILL AVAILABLE!

Hear these fabulous songs from your past.
The authentic DHS sound complete with
booklet of words.

CONTACT GRETA ON 039754-2440

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

We don't want to lose you! Make
sure you stay part of our special
DHS family. Tell us if you move!

And remember, you have
already paid for the Newsletter
and postage...why waste it?

INFORMATION PLEASE !

**We want news about careers,
achievements and social lives
of Exies of all eras. Just phone
Don Metcalfe 039 704 7938**

AWARDS

Drama Festival

Saturday November 29th 1997 saw
Dandenong High School rise to great
heights at the Monash Drama Festival.
Twelve Year 10 students competed in,
AND WON, what is
the most prestigious Drama competition
in the State.

The students competed against 16 other
schools, including Methodist Ladies
College, Essendon Grammar and
Warragul Regional College.

*The \$1200 of lighting equipment will be
used for the drama facility!*

B. R. Rayment Award for Musical Excellence

(Sponsored by the DHS Ex-
Students' Association)

Bruce Rayment was a former principal
who supported and encouraged
participation and development of musical
activities. This award is presented to a
student of any level who has achieved a
high standard of musical ability.

The recipient in 1997 was MONICA JONG,
who studied music as an elective subject,
and achieved an 'A' grade. She also sat 2
AMEB exams, receiving an 'A' in the First
Grade Violin, and 99% for her First Grade
Theory.

SCHOOL BADGES - NEXT EDITION !

DHS Ex-Students Association - Office bearers & contact numbers:

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