

Dragons Abreast Sydney

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Hi all,

Did you see the wonderful spread in the Saturday *Herald* about us? It carried a big picture of DASydney in action under the Anzac Bridge and stroked by the twins. What the story didn't tell you was that the night the poor photographer, Tanya Lake, came to take the picture was all stormy with lots of lightning and driving rain – hardly a great night to be on the water. But, media tarts that we are, we figured that if we stayed right under the bridge that it would cop any stray lightning instead of us and help keep Tanya and her expensive camera dry. Tanya had never set foot on a dragon boat before, let alone perched precariously on the prow, unable to hold on with even one hand for fear of dropping her expensive camera – one brave lady! We were thrilled with the publicity as it is the first time we've ever made a major publication in Sydney, and what a spread it was! It generated heaps of enquiries from prospective paddlers.

The following day, in the *Sunday Telegraph*, there was a double page article about dragon boating, with the last column of the story devoted to Dragons Abreast. Unfortunately that article didn't give our contact details, but still lots of people saw it. What a weekend for Dragons Abreast publicity! And the phone calls have hardly stopped! As I write this already 24 potential new paddlers have signed up to "have a go" at the Newbies day this weekend – keep fingers crossed for a fine day!!

We've continued spreading the word about Dragons Abreast to captive audiences this last month. Pam Bell spoke to the North Sydney Zonta group the same night as I corralled the ladies of the Nepean Zonta group (sure covering some territory with these gigs!). The following morning I regaled the Mothers and Daughters Breakfast at the Sydney Secondary College in Balmain with our story. Pam also managed to insert info about DASydney into her recent speech at Queenwood School (Mosman). In Bendigo, Vic. she was asked to address 400 ex-graduate nurses on 'Meeting a



"Reading all about it" – Kathryn Davis and Carolyn New take time out from racing at Penrith.

Challenge', so covered the history of DAA then more specifically how DASydney girls came to participate in the world DB Challenge in China and what was involved (training etc). Pam says "I also informed them re our

success in Canberra. Many nurses spoke to me afterwards re D/Abreast and I really think the message about the fun and increase in fitness levels that Dragon Boating can provide survivors made an impact."



Pam Bell showing on of our trophies to Zonta North Sydney President ?????



Jenny Bounds and Jan Hartley (President of zonta Nepean) with Cynthia Kuiper celebrating their club's birthday.

You've seen the pics, now read the book

Last month, at the last minute, we were able to bring you some super pictures from the State Dragon Boat Titles at Penrith – so you've seen the pictures, now you can get to read the book! Well not quite – but Brenda Owen, our Mistress of Merchandising, competed at Penrith for the first time and her tale pretty much tells it how it was:

When I came for my first paddle in late January 2004, everyone was very busy organising Chinese New Year at Darling Harbour. By the time I came back for my second paddle in March everyone was talking about the fun they had experienced at the State Titles at Penrith and planning for the Nationals in Perth. There was so much excitement and I felt rather over-awed by the magnitude of what I was getting myself into. I could only dream about what it would be like to paddle at the Olympic regatta centre at Penrith. Last Saturday that dream became a reality – I finally got there myself.

I was in bed, nice and early the night before, just like Mel said, – visualising the race. About 3:00 am I was awake, running through the checklist in my head. Did I have everything, was I sure how to get there, must remember to leave something wholesome for my son for lunch. 5:30am – there was no point in trying to go back to sleep so I got up and did some last minute stuff before leaving at 6:45. I was on my own at the regatta, for the first time my family all had other things to do.

Getting to the venue was easy, parked the car, lugged the gear to the island and found it full of smiling faces, coloured ankle bands, paddles, lunch boxes and chatter. What a great venue, what fantastic weather and what timing, the first race started as I sat down.

Before I knew it, it was time. Warm up, line up, no it's too late to go to the loo, down to the marshalling area, in the boat and 'paddles up'.



Brenda Owen making a point with a peach at the State Titles at Penrith

We made our way to the start with Carol Fentoullis at the helm. It felt great. My heart was pounding and then Deb Read talked us through the race, deep breaths...focus. Kaye Gailey is my partner (she was my very first partner back in Jan 2004), Claire Hendy's our drummer, Jenny & Jo Petterson are strokes – we'll be fine.

'Are you ready....' Hooter, two, three, build, it, up, four, five,.....reach, it, out,.....breathe, twist, reach, build, it, up, leg drive, power, reach, take, it, home, 'give it all you've got', 'drive it home'!.....drive, drive, Hooter, paddles out - ahhhhhh!. Acknowledgements all round, it feels fantastic, still some energy left, I mustn't have paddled hard enough! We look around, there are two boats in front of us and two boats behind us, three cheers, – a very satisfying result – what a thrill!

There is nothing quite like the first time. I am no longer a 500m virgin.

The day just got better and better, our DAA teams were all wonderful and we all deserved our medals – another first for me. First of many I hope, I'm hooked! Yelling encouragement to other teams, smelling the linament and lining up for a massage with Snatch – they didn't seem to think it was amusing – picnicing on milk crates in the car park, sampling everyone's home cooking and solving all the world's issues in the stands with a great bunch of friends.

Photos, presentations, cake, lug the gear back to the car, a quick trip home, shower and out to dinner. I should have been exhausted but the adrenalin carried me right through until midnight.

Bring on Canberra!

Sweepless in Sydney

Those who have paddled with us for a while are all too familiar with the agonies we have organising sweeps to take us out on our practices. Over the last two years we have prevailed upon a range of generous paddlers from other clubs who have very kindly given us endless hours of their time (eg Chris Alexandrou, Akal Khalsa, James Whisker, Lachie Sillar etc) sweeping for us.

HOWEVER, we must become independent so that we can paddle when we want to, without having to keep changing times when suddenly sweeps aren't available.

To do that effectively we need at least half

a dozen of our own fully certified sweeps so that we aren't left high and dry if some of them are on vacation, paddling for Oz, otherwise occupied, don't feel like it, aren't well etc. – also so they can take turns sweeping and still retain their paddling skills. Nobody should be expected to sweep all the time and have to give up paddling.

Speaking personally, despite some trepidation, I've found sweeping to be good fun – especially now I have a little more confidence. I think anyone of us can probably do it unless they have a medical reason not to (eg. bad back, significant osteoporosis, wonky knees etc) or they have terrible balance.

The logo and the poll

This is email poll thing is very cool and a great way to be able to survey the membership on important issues. It's about the logo we are asking you to vote on to be the official logo of DASydney – you can't miss it on the top of this newsletter. To have your say anonymously, please log onto the group email site DASydney@yahoo.com and go to "Polls", where you can lodge your vote. If you vote against it, or wish to see changes, please email me with your suggested alternatives.

Capital time in Canberra

When you read how much fun we all had in Canberra I want you all to make a mental note that next year you will come to the Nationals with us – it’s just soooo much fun being there with a huge bunch of friends and paddling together, it’s almost surreal. There were two facets to our Canberra weekend – on the Friday the state teams battled each other for the National Championships and on the Saturday and Sunday all the clubs competed against each other in the Club National Championships. That meant our DASydney girls in the State Squad paddled in blue for NSW on Friday, then on the weekend we all paddled in pink (ie. as Dragons Abreast) for our club, DASydney. Not only did our NSW State Team girls do brilliantly, but our DASydney team’s medals (silver in the 500m and bronze in the 250m) were won against non-breast cancer survivor teams from around the country – truly awesome achievements!

Melanie Cantwell was magnificent, orchestrating such a fantastic regatta there on the banks of beautiful Yarralumla Reach (she arranged perfect weather for us too – is there no end to her talents?), and the Canberra teams made great hosts, with DA ACT turning on nibbles in their tent and hosting a fantastic dinner in the evening. DASydney Team captain, Anne Gates, was our true heroine of the weekend club paddling – she had a herculean task juggling everyone into the different races while still complying with all the DAA and DBNSW racing rules. She did a wonderful job, especially given there were lots of late changes and far too many girls for one boat. Fairlie Stanish had made her usual sterling effort arranging fantastic apartments for us to stay in, so many of us stayed together and trooped around Canberra in one big, happy gang! Special congratulations to Carol Fentoullis for her brilliant efforts, under very trying conditions, sweeping DASydney in four races, including a desperately exciting bronze medal win. She is now a fully certified sweep (sweeping in regattas being part of the qualifying criteria).

Most awe-inspiring winner of the day was Jo Petterson who took out gold as National Champion in the Premier Womens’ 500m, the Mixed Masters 500m and the Womens’ Masters 500m. Just astonishing!! Not only that, she had the great satisfaction of seeing the team she had coached (the NSW Masters Women) snatch gold – what a fitting tribute to a great coach!

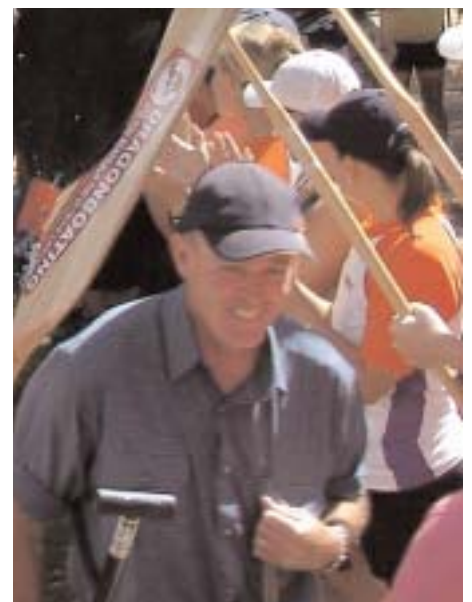
Geoff Eldridge paddled with the victorious NSW Men’s Masters team winning his first national gold medal, then earned another gold in the Mixed Masters, along with Jenny Petterson, Fran O’Brien, Eugenia Raftos and Cynthia Kuiper.



Above: DASydney girls who were in the NSW State Team: Back row: Fran, Sophie, Anne, Kris, Carolyn, Claire, Cynth, Tracey, Margaret. Middle row: Deb C Front row: Jenny & Jo (with the blue nail polish), Fairlie, Carol, Sue and Eugenia.

Right: Hugs all round after winning Gold. Below right: National champion Jo Petterson with her three Gold Medals.

Below left: Geoff Eldridge coming through the paddle guard of honour after the Mixed Masters.



A very evocative explanation of the elation of winning national gold comes from a supremely happy national champ, Sue Gibson. Sue is a kindly teacher and all her little charges were hanging out for news of her exploits on the Friday. This was her reflection on the day:

What an amazing weekend!!!

I have only been a member of DASydney for a short time but a goal I set for myself was to one day make the State Team. I nearly was-

n't going to try out but thought just give it your best.

To my amazement I made the team! At times I thought training might kill me but I wasn't going to be beaten. A lot of self talk took place, I CAN do this, I CAN do this; I wasn't going to be beaten.

".....Another 500m race against the premiers and then we'll do some strength work girls." I CAN do this! Suddenly training was

Capital time in Canberra

over and race day was fast approaching.

Cynthia, Fairlie and I left Thursday morning for Canberra. We stopped for lunch at a great café in Goulburn and then headed on to Canberra and a 'light' training session. As we pulled up in the car park we could see some of the team had arrived and they were in their uniforms. I kept having to pinch myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming.

The afternoon on the water was pretty choppy and I thought, if it kept up, racing was going to be tough.

After a wonderful dinner with Tracey, Sophie and Helen at a local Italian restaurant we went back to our rooms to rest in preparation for race day. I didn't think I was too nervous but I saw every hour that night.

Friday morning dawned, a beautiful warm day. No wind. Up and into my uniform and meet the girls at 6.30am. We head off for Weston Park.

7.00am team meeting, briefing, race strategy and visualization. We have a strong crew and want to win the heat and head straight into the final. Our coach, the incredible Jo "I know we can do this..." I was to sit out the heat, but would paddle in the final.

The race was called Masters Women – N.S.W, Canberra B and NT to the marshalling area. The girls look fabulous in their NSW uniforms, and there were a few nerves "..... do I have time to go to the loo?"

Into the boats. They looked fantastic paddling up to the start, long reach, beautiful timing.

Before we knew it the start gun had sounded and they were off. Neck and neck between NSW and NT. Lots of screaming from the rest of the NSW team, "come on girls you can do it, go NSW. New South Wales wins!!!! They were astounding.

My turn, Masters Women's Final – NSW, NT and Queensland. We marshal and I feel amazingly calm (I think), I look down at my hands and they are shaking.

Mel is at the drum, she is remarkable. Mel calls for "focus in the boat" and pulls all the nervous energy and attention into the boat. "You can do this girls, you have trained for this and you know what to do."

The water is so calm it didn't take long to get the boats lined up. Set yourselves, Are you ready, Attention "Bang" and we're off! 1 2,3... build it up 4,5..... Reach it out.... Reach, Reach, twist, and watch the stroke. I can hear Mel urging us on "YOU CAN DO THIS.....THIS IS FANTASTIC" Akal is sweeping and screaming encouragement from the rear "REACH, REACH, LEG DRIVE..... in a flash to race is over. How did we do???? Looking around, we are not sure if we have got 1st or 2nd, watching and waiting.

George, the head coach, is standing on the shore suddenly he has his thumb up and waving his paddle in the air. We have won. Jubilation!!!

The race was exciting and exhausting and over in a flash. In the last 50 metres of the race I tried harder than I have ever tried anything in my life. I finished the race in a heap, gasping for air and barely able to hold my paddle; my legs had turned to jelly.

It was one of the most amazing moments of my life and the range of emotions that flashed through my body was incredible. The smile still hasn't come off my face. As soon as I came off the water I called my family and my work mates as they have all been so encouraging. It was fabulous to hear the children call out "Gibson, Gibson, Gibson, Oi, Oi Oi."

It was an amazing day and using Mel's words, an awesome weekend.

I feel blessed to be part of such a wonderful group of women, for your friendship, for your laughter, for your courage and determination.



Sue Gibson's son Campbell was awed by his Mum's performance

So roll on Germany. On to more practices, more laughs, more aches and pains and, look out world, here we come.

So very proud to be part of Dragons Abreast Sydney and NSW State Team.

Margaret Cantwell, Mel's Mum, has been involved in dragonboating for years, backing up Melanie in the incredible job she does as State President of DBNSW. Then about a year ago Margaret figured it was time to hop into the boat herself instead of always being behind the scenes. This is her story:

What a great experience this dragon boat season has been.

At the beginning of the year I set myself a "challenge" for my special birthday year – to try out for the State team in the Masters. If I made it, I made it – if not, I had given it a go! My family were supportive. "You can do this, Mum!" Fortunately I had already been paddling with the most wonderful group of women in DASydney and enjoying this sport.

I was so proud to be stroke with Melanie and win a gold medal in the "mum in a boat" race at Chinese New Year. If nothing else this would make my year! The whole family is always involved in CNY.

However with some apprehension I did the trials (and to my surprise I could actually move the boat!), attended all of training sessions and felt confident I was giving each session every effort and heeding the advice from the coaches, especially Amanda and Jo. I felt great! To ultimately be included in the State Team was a big buzz and I am very happy with my achievement.

Many thanks to the Masters women for their dedication, encouragement and inspiration to each other. I was very proud to be part of this TEAM effort and NSW SUCCESS on Friday and with DASydney on Saturday and Sunday. What a great weekend. Thanks also to Amanda, Claire, Anne, Anthony Mak, Zeus, Tanya, Sylvia, Suzy, Karen, Michelle, Sharon L, James and Lachie who were always supportive and caring in encouraging me in "my journey".

This will not be the end!



Capital time in Canberra



Above: The DAS team with their Silver medals in Canberra.

Below: The Flowers on the Water ceremony held in Canberra was the biggest of its kind ever held in Australia, with a total of 12 boats participating.



That's Entertainment!



On matters more mundane – you may have seen the article on page 6 of our last newsletter, explaining that DAA is calling for financial assistance from all DA groups. The idea of individuals running 'Pink Parties' to raise extra funding to cover expenses at a national level was suggested. Your DASydney committee worries that our group is just about worn out with fund raising after CNY. We would still like to do something however, so as a club, we have embraced the Entertainment Book idea.

It is an annual publication containing a multitude of discount vouchers (valid until June 2006) which can be used at coffee shops, cafes, restaurants, fast food outlets, drycleaners, video hire places, wine shops, holiday accomodation sites fine hotels & a host of other venues. The books sell for \$60 and with each sale we raise \$12 for DAA.

We are hoping that each of you can sell at least 3 - 6. Some may feel reluctant to be involved, but we all have friends, neighbours, family or workmates that may be willing to help out. People buying the book from you can more than recover their outlay if they use the vouchers and then they are also helping DAA stay afloat in the process.

Everyone is being asked to embrace this venture to the best of their ability, other wise we will each need to start organising 'Perfectly Pink Parties'.

Brenda Owen has done a stupendous job of pulling this Entertainment Book promotion together, so hopefully everyone will match her effort by enthusiastically selling the books.

I'm sure you're all beavering away at it already (the first one is the hardest, after that you get in the swing of it). I nervously emailed all my friends – hope they aren't ex-friends now – with apologies for hitting them up via email (I was too embarrassed to ask them on the phone) and inviting them to ignore the offer.

Blow me down if two of them didn't email right back and say they'd each buy one – I was amazed – and delighted.

Thus inspired and following one of Brenda's suggestions, this afternoon I pulled up a little sheet with the DASydney logo and a short blurb about Dragons Abreast. Then introducing myself and explaining that I live locally and paddle with Dragons Abreast, I said we wanted to sell the Entertainment Books to raise funds for promoting Dragons Abreast and breast cancer awareness – and to call me to have a look at the book. Copied that four times down the page, printed off a bunch and cut them apart and stapled one of my little intro/info strips to each of the order forms. Tomorrow morning I'm off walking the dog and stuffing as many local letterboxes with my creations as I can (big dog – needs lots of exercise!).

If you've come up with some successful ploys for selling the books, please email details of your ideas to everyone right away at DASydney@yahoo.com so we can all capitalise on your clever thinking. I'm confident that, if we all pull our weight, we can raise heaps of money for DAA – hey, we're breast cancer survivors – we can do anything!

Getting Shirty

We Dragons Abreast girls are rightly recognised for our fuschia pink tops (even though most of us have never worn fuschia before). Those rashies not only act as instant identifiers and DA advertisements when we paddle, they offer excellent sun protection as well. However there are some issues with the national rashies that continue to plague us – the erratic supply, the lack of breathability of the fabric, and some girls consistently choosing not to wear them.

The unfortunate result is that at regattas, while other sporting teams all look as smart as paint in their matching outfits, we mostly look like a rabble – with dozens of different designs, different shades of pink, different styles of shirt. There have been anti-rashie rumblings for many months within the membership so the committee has started investigating the possibility of sourcing our own DASydney team shirt (much as the Missabittatitti girls in Brisbane have done – sharing elements of the national shirt, but still being distinctive as their own Dragons Abreast group).

Our marvellous Mistress of Merchandising, Brenda Owen, is trying to come up with a range of suitable options and then we'll ask for your comments. In particular we are hoping to identify a breathable, rapid drying fabric that can be made into an attractive, affordable top in a wide range of sizes.

A Bit Bilious in Ireland

It's just wonderful to have good news from Helen Hynes, who's now living in Ireland and doing well after her recent operation. In one of her early emails she asks us "at the next flowers on the water ceremony, throw in a bilious green flower to represent my stomach." Her latest email reads: Hi Girls,
Thank you for your most beautiful gift. Although I have not seen them yet – Julian tells me they are beautiful and I should see them this Friday – when I hope to go home.
I am feeling better and better every day and have an appointment with an oncologist next week. I think of you all with great fondness.
Helen

Some Committee Ponderings

Having only started from scratch just over two years ago, DASydney has grown rapidly, particularly in the last twelve months. Not surprisingly, there have been growing pains in absorbing such a constant stream of new paddlers and there has been a steep learning curve for those brave enough to have volunteered their time and best efforts to help run the club. I use the word "brave" advisedly because the committee members have, from time to time, been a magnet for criticism – some justified, much just ill-informed.

One thing is certain, it would be hugely detrimental to the club if the hard-earned knowledge we have gained were lost as various committee members stepped down, as they surely will over time. To hopefully prevent the loss of this carefully accumulated institutional knowledge the committee met for our first whole-day-procedures-related meeting this month, separately from our normal committee meeting. The goal of the procedures meeting was to identify the things we could do better and to document things that need to happen and when and how they should happen.

It's a huge job and far from finished, but it has highlighted the pressing need to diffuse knowledge and understanding of the club's workings more widely within the membership.

With so many members now and such a wide range of activities, the task of running the club is beyond the capability of a small committee. We need lots of helpers to sustain the current program, then the load will not be so intimidating as to deter others from becoming office-bearers in the future.

Sooooo, based on the principle that what you get out of life depends on what you put into it, we are thinking that it makes sense to invite all members to choose which sub-committee they would like to join. In that way each of your office-bearers will have a small pool of helpers they can call on when a hand is needed here or there.

The list of sub-committees is still being finalised and when this happens, then everyone will be invited to nominate their preference.

Does that sound fair? Stay tuned as we develop this idea further in coming months.

Crafty Ladies

On Friday 13th May the DASydney craft group (or BOOBS Exchange, as they call themselves – ie. Building on our Beautiful Skills) will be making a Circular Mini Memory Book (bit hard to describe but lovely to keep or give to someone you love) under the tutelage of Robin Shoebridge. You will need to ring Robin on 9520 7793 to reserve a spot and get further details. We will be meeting from 10am till around 3pm. You need to bring your own lunch and a coffee mug, plus some scissors and \$10 for the kit. Robin will give you her address and advise you what other things you might want to bring such as photos etc.

Our last craft day was a huge challenge for old two thumbs here (I'm so ignorant about needlecraft that I had never realised that different sized needles existed for any reason

other than the size of the thread hole required). Golly – my only attempts at decorative stitching previously were in school (and what agony to produce such ghastly results – no wonder I've avoided sewing since!). Under Margo-Lynne's expert tuition my grub roses eventually took shape. It wasn't her fault they turned out more like a little pile of worms, but hey – it's a start! Who knows, one day (if I ever score any grandchildren) maybe I'll be able to embroider something cute (seems to be a prerequisite for grannyhood, so I'll keep practising, in case). Anyway, it was a fun day, aside from my dud grubs.

Everyone is welcome to come to these craft days – it's not just about learning new crafts each time, it's also a lovely way to get to know each other better and to have a lot of fun. Next month's craft is fantastic but too hard to describe – you'll just have to come along and see for yourself – should be fun!



Winter Wobblies

As you all know by now, we have been forced to change our Saturday paddling time to 10.00am because our sweeps will be unavailable at our previous time for the next three months – and we simply can't paddle without sweeps. We believe the new time will work because those girls can manage to sweep for us then.

By now you may also have figured out that there are a couple of potential problems looming with continuing the regular Thursday night paddling in winter.

- Firstly we have never run a weeknight winter paddle before (we only started the twilight paddle last November, prior to that we only ever paddled once a week). We are not sure if there will be sufficient numbers to enable the Thursday paddle to continue – time will tell how keen people are.
- Secondly we are still trying to line up potential sweeps.

If there aren't the numbers to enable handling of the boat, or if we can't get sweeps, we may have to suspend the weeknight paddle until the spring. We'll take it week by week.

Within those constraints things should continue pretty much as normal, though with smaller numbers. In the absence of the 7-10 girls who will be training for the next few months with the AUSquad, PLUS the absence of the 10 girls going to Canada for the 10 year anniversary of survivor paddling, some of the remaining experienced paddlers will manage our DASydney paddles. Sally Lynch will continue to handle the paddle register (ie. you still let her know whether you are coming OR NOT) and Carolyn New will help her with organising Meet 'n Greet, sweeps and someone to do the coaching. Most times Deb Read or Mel will be there to do the warm-up and the coaching.

Please keep a close watch on your email so you can keep tabs on what is happening and whether we have the numbers for each proposed winter paddle.

Milestones

No new members last month but guess who's blowing out candles (won't tell you how many) – Rosalie Osland on the 3rd, Margaret Cantwell on the 5th, Margo-Lynne Lee on the 11th and Irene Stewart on the 23rd. We wish them all happy paddling in the coming year and promise not to call them older paddlers!

Ask Deb

This month it's the gen on insomnia from our very own naturopath, Deb Cooper.

Insomnia

If you can't get to sleep easily or you wake frequently and have trouble getting back to sleep, here are some ideas.



- Go to bed at the same time and get up at the same time every day.
- Never ever have an afternoon nap.
- Make sure you have a good bed and a good pillow that supports your neck well.
- Have the lightest possible bedding for maximum warmth. The heavier the blankets the more you move and the hotter you'll get.
- If your partner is a snorer, get some earplugs or sleep in another room.
- If you can't shut down due to anxiety or worry, then debrief your day before you go to bed. Visualise a cupboard with doors open and put your troubles into boxes on shelves in the cupboard. Prioritize things so the things to be done tomorrow are on the middle shelf. Keep in mind some things won't be resolved and they should be put high in the cupboard at the back. When you are finished, close the doors, take a deep breath and know it can all wait for another day.
- Be aware that a lot of sleep is often lost through worrying about the fact that you can't sleep. Even if you don't feel you are sleeping, lie there and relax, you will at least be rested. In general the first 4 hours is deep sleep, then you have light sleep in 90 minute cycles.
- Get rid of the clock or put it where you won't see it.
- If you have mirrored wardrobes, drape them or open them so you can't see your reflection.
- Maintain good nutrition. Nutrients that help you sleep are found in protein, vegetables and whole grains. Avoid caffeine rich foods, high sugar and fatty foods.
- Remove all artificial sweeteners and foods that contain aspartame from your diet.
- Practice stress management techniques regularly and develop ways to release negative emotions and anxiety. The body is very receptive to positive changes and strategies that reduce nervous and muscular tension and bring about mental calmness.
- Never go to bed on an empty or overfull stomach and try not to eat after 8 pm.
- Try having a cup of hot cocoa or teaspoonful of molasses in warm low fat milk or soy drink instead. Cocoa is a good tonic that is low in caffeine and molasses is rich in B vitamins.
- Avoid aluminium containing antacids because they decrease sleep quality.
- Do not watch or listen to exciting television or radio programs before bed.
- Avoid vigorous exercise before bed, but make sure you have some moderate exercise during the day.
- Ensure your bedroom is dark, quiet and well ventilated.
- Resolve differences early in the evening and don't take quarrels to bed with you.
- Read a good book or enjoy fifteen minutes of tranquil music on retiring.
- Have a relaxing warm bath containing a few drops of lavender oil before bed.
- Sex, if satisfying, induces sleep.
- Unwind and spend time consciously steadying your breathing and relaxing your muscles.
- Pretend you want to stay awake and see if you can.
- Breathe slowly and imagine with every breath that your body is relaxing deeper and deeper...
- Some useful herbal teas are valerian, catmint, lemon balm, skullcap, hops, chamomile and passionflower.
- There are a number of essential oils that can be useful. Bergamot, frankincense, lavender and neroli or try a few drops of marjoram sprinkled on your pillowcase.

DAS CALENDAR 2005

Month	Date(s)	Event	Location	Details
May	Fri 13th	DAS Craft Group (BOOBS Exchange)	Engadine	Making a Circular Mini Memory Book. Contact Robin Shoebridge for more details.
	Sun 29th	DAS Champagne Picnic Breakfast	TBA	Contact Margo-Lynne Lee if you plan to come.
June	Fri 9th	Private BC Fundraiser	Bellevue Hill	Guest Speaker: Cynthia Kuiper
	Sun 12th	Ord River Dragon Boat Marathon	Kununurra, NT	http://members.westnet.com.au/billh/kdbc/marathon.htm Surely there has to be one of these in every dragon boater's life? Maybe '06?
	Fri 24th-Sun 26th	Abreast in a Boat 10 Year Anniversary	Vancouver, Canada	Contact Michelle Hanton on hanton@ozemail.com.au
August	Sat 6th- Sun 7th	IDBF 6th World DB Racing Championships	Berlin/Hamburg, Germany	TBA
October	Fri 7th-Sun 16th	10th Australian Masters Games	Adelaide	www.AustralianMasters Games.com
	Wed 12th	Hornsby Zonta	Hornsby	Guest speaker: Cynthia Kuiper