

Dragons Abreast Sydney

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Christmas Capers

WOW! What a night! Eat your heart out if you weren't there!!

Who'd be mad enough to allow their home be invaded by boatloads of rowdy paddlers celebrating Christmas? In the face of the ravening hordes Carol and Mike Fentoullis remained incredibly calm, gracious hosts as their lovely home was overrun. It was a beautiful summer evening and the indoor/outdoor/perfect-spots-for-everyone flow of the house and garden helped make the party really inclusive and happy. Thanks Carol and Mike!

It's no secret that we always value and appreciate our DASydney guys but that night Neil Millgate and Serge Piniero, with their wonderfully warm clowning Santa antics, were absolutely priceless – creating boatloads of true Santa believers! They pulled off an amazingly deft duo act, managing to be incredibly funny, naughty and nice while still maintaining the whole magic Santa aura for the entranced littlies throughout. We love you guys!



Santa's knee was the place to be at the DASydney Christmas party. Top Left: Deb Hirst with Santa (aka Niel Millgate) and his helper (Serge Piniero). Left: Rosie O'Donnell and above: Gael Ellis

CNY DA Hospital Challenge

After a few false starts, approval finally came through a few days before Christmas for the 2007 DA Hospital Challenge at Chinese New Year – not the greatest time to grab attention from the medical world, but that can't be helped. What it does do is put terrific pressure on us now to recruit another 240 breast cancer professionals in time for this exciting race.

What can you do? A lot - because I can't phone each and every one of them again this year. So I need you all to contact your oncologists, breast care nurses, surgeons, radiographers etc and badger them into signing up, if they haven't already done so. The entry forms and info flyer are on the DASydney group email site for you to download - then go and stand over them while they fill out the forms. But we need to act fast!

They will be in stellar company, with the cream of the Sydney BC medical establishment participating. It matters not one bit that they haven't done it before because we will teach them the weekend before. After all, they had us all do scary things – now we are asking them to do something outrageous! We need them all to experience what we want their patients to experience – so they can be medical missionaries for Dragons Abreast. Just think of all those poor gals out there with breast cancer who don't know about Dragons Abreast, so miss out on all the fun – simply because nobody told them! Let's fix that!

Chinese New Year Banquet

This is easily our biggest social function of the year and is an integral part of the Chinese New Year experience. Is your CNY Banquet booking confirmed? – places are filling up fast already with out-of-town paddlers so don't risk missing the fun with your paddling pals at your own club CNY celebration! Remember your reservations are only confirmed after payment is received – booking forms are on the DASydney group email site. Partners are welcome to come too.

Kathryn Piniero showed her colours as our new social coordinator genius. For those who weren't there, at the last AGM Kathryn was literally ambushed, kidnapped, dragooned and enslaved into being our new social coordinator and she faced dauntingly big shoes to fill. But fill them she did – it was a great party and certainly our funniest yet.

Thank you Kathryn from us all – you pulled together a fabulously memorable evening. But despite the hundreds of photos taken that night, those of us who were there know deep down that photos can't begin to capture the depth of the evening's fun.

And the gastronomic delights – so many talented cooks and so many recipes that will need to be shared! It was a great group contribution and has no doubt fortified us all for the paddling sessions Carol has in mind for us as the season progresses. And Carol does indeed take her coaching seriously, just look at the smile on her face in the party photo where she's holding the Pan Pacs medal – it reads 'Best and Fairest Dragon Boat Team, DASydney 2006' – that's definitely our best win yet!

Doncha just love DASydney? Such a great group of people!



Santa magic for Luke Jeffcoat



Jo Petterson, Muriel Buckeridge, Kath O'Connell and Jenny Petterson



Robin Shoebridge, Jo Fizell and Bella investigate the chocolate fountain



Above: Sally Lynch, Wilma Kippers and Robin Shoebridge with Santa and his helper.



Head Coach, Carol Fentoullis with DASzlers' Best and Fairest ' medal from the Pan Pacs and one of the trophies from Roseville.



What on earth did Brenda Owen say to Sergio Piniero?



The DASydney "Boys" get together at the Christmas Party.

November Twilight Regatta

It was a lovely, balmy summer evening on the harbour in late November. The regatta was late starting because of all the charter boats suddenly deciding to leave to collect their partygoers for the night (shades of problems to come when the dry dock goes ahead).

Heading off for the circuit of Rozelle Bay, DASzlers were first off the mark with other teams following at 20 second intervals. It was all very relaxed and informal which was why the race officials didn't really care that some of the crews illegally passed on the inside and finessed other naughty tricks – but Sue McClelland, sweeping her first official race, kept DASzlers strictly within the rules (we were possibly the only crew that didn't break them).

Still, it was heaps of fun and a wonderful performance by DASzlers with only three men in our crew against crews with 10. We came in strongly, even delivering a solid kick at the finish – a great testament to how well Carol has managed our training to date. Our time was 10m 57s over the 2km. What a triumph – we came 1st, 2nd and 3rd in our Mixed Masters category (also last if you want to be pedantic). Can't do better than that. (Sorry, no pictures from the Twilight Regatta – we were having too much fun paddling!)

If you haven't been to a twilight regatta yet, you're missing one of the great treats of the sport – lovely friendly, informal atmosphere, incomparable setting (while it lasts), gorgeous sunset colours reflected on the bay, no race fees and sausage sizzle afterwards. Make sure you register with me, Cynthia, for the next Twilight Regatta on Friday January 19th.

Penrith Regatta 3rd Dec

Team Captain, Fairlie Stanish, summed up the Penrith Regatta on 3rd December with these comments:

What a great day! Although it threatened to rain, the day was completely dry – the only moisture from paddle splashes on the regatta course – and general conditions a little gusty, but fair.

The Masters Mixed team was in the first race of the day. Although after two heats, we didn't make the final, our four men and the women with them, were well up with the competition and a credit to everyone concerned. The Masters Women again took out line honours – earning another fantastic trophy for our cabinet. As well, Sue and Vicki chalked up very successful sweeps on the day and are fast



Happy DASzlers coming off the water at Penrith

on the track to gaining their level 3 (fully qualified) sweep status. Congratulations to everyone who was whatever part of the teams today – another very special day in the annals of DASydney (aka DASzlers).

Seems some of the dragon boating fraternity still haven't wrapped their minds around our new name, "DASzlers", as was all too obvious from the commentary at Penrith. They called us all sorts of silly names, leading up to some loony, tongue-in-cheek commentary and razzing about us in action. While we were oblivious to what the commentator was saying, back in the grandstand Di Millgate heard it all and tells it this way:

The "commentator" announced the participating teams in the race and, in doing so, indicated that they'd never heard of DASzlers and figured that the team was the franchised owners of a Bank Street Sizzlers. Then Fairlie got their minds right and explained the prove-

nance of the name and the make up of the team. Once the guys heard that the team was made up of BC survivors and supporters, they started to be a bit more complimentary – and decided to back them in the race.

With Sue McClelland sweeping, they talked about Sue's "magic weapon, the schnow plough – a secret being trialled." Said this plan was a classic trick – to delay the start to get attention. When the race began, they were still supporting DASydney – until they realised that the other teams were stronger.

And then they started on the team's technique, claiming it was the best they had seen that afternoon so therefore "technical honours" went to DASzlers. And they finished by saying that winning the technical honours was the most important, because, later on, people won't remember who came first or second, but they will remember DASzlers for how technically brilliant they were.

December Newbies and Save our Bay Rally

Our last Newbies Day for the year coincided with the Save Our Bay Rally (when dragon-boaters, rowers and outriggers all took to the water with placards trying to plead for the dry docking facility not to go ahead and ruin our paddling environment). The 13 very keen newbies showed amazing aptitude for dragon boating - it is virtually unheard of for a boatload of newbies to get their timing right on day one - so watch out for these paddlers! Of special interest to "our guys" were the newbie men who showed up - proof that attending the DASydney Christmas Party is dangerous indeed - as Chris Kwong (Sue Tolhurst's partner) found out when the entire membership set upon him with entreaties to paddle. Can it be that we are getting closer to having a full complement of men in our mixed races?

The rally seems to have caught the attention of the paddling public but it's hard to be confident that the sporting needs of the paddlers and rowers will carry much weight against the huge commercial and political interests involved. We can only hope that some modifications might be made to lessen the impact on our activity but it looks like we'd best enjoy our paddling there while we still can.

Our next Newbies Day will be Saturday 10th March - and please remember, they MUST phone me first to go through the ins and outs of their potential membership if they want to register to come along.



The dangers of coming to the Christmas party - Santa and Sergio coercing Chris Kwong into paddling



Newbies helping us to protest against ruining our bay

Jolly Green M&M Giants

For this project the giants were Gael Ellis, our Fundraising Coordinator who managed the promo, and all of you who managed to flog off yet more M&Ms (the green and whites) after already having worn out your welcome with your friends the previous month selling the pink and white M&Ms. Admittedly the green and whites were unbelievably yummy, but it was a big ask nevertheless, especially so soon after the pinks. Why the hurry - well Mars were discontinuing the green and whites so it was then or never. Imagine our delight that this second round of M&Ming managed to net just over \$1,500 for DASydney. A sterling effort and congratulations to everyone involved.



Myall Lakes Weekend

Mid-November saw a few of us heading up the coast to Myall Lakes for a pink lady dragon boating weekend – what a great idea! Brenda Owen, Robin Shoebridge, Sue McClelland, Vicki McLean, Muriel Buckeridge, Gael Ellis and Vince, Fairlie Stanish and Paul, Margo-Lynne Lee and Mor Ling, Rosie O'Donnell and Jo Jeffcoat and John, Luke and Amelia and I made up the DASydney contingent. There were also lots of pink paddlers from other DA clubs up and down the coast so our dawn paddle on the lake was the classic composite crew.

We all stayed at Eco Point Resort at Myall Lakes, which is just under three hours north of Sydney. Eco Point Resort is sponsoring both the World Championships and Abreast in Australia next year, so getting together there seemed like a good idea. It's such a pretty spot, in the middle of the most beautiful national park, with a great range of accommodation to suit every budget and it's absolutely ideal for dragon boating!

Luckily some AUSDBF and DAA board members were also there for the weekend (having meetings) and Mel had organised a dragon boat up from Sydney so we could all do some paddling. It was a busy weekend because, as well as the paddling, Rob Turnbull put some proto-sweeps through their paces (congratulations to Vicki McLean and Sue



Elsbeth Humphries from Canberra sweeping and Rob Turnbull coaching the wonderfully composite pink lady crew

McClelland who both gained Level 2 Sweep accreditation); Gavin Godfrey ran a great paddling coaching session which Brenda, Rosie, Sue, Vicki and I attended and the others raved about a yoga/meditation session run concurrently (unfortunately) by Darren Ma.

Probably best that we don't dwell on the details of the shenanigans from "Party Central" in Sue, Vicki and Muriel's villa each evening, but suffice to say there was much

hilarity and we were lucky we weren't told by management to tone it down. (Again, no photos – sorry).

If any of you get the chance to go to Eco Point Resort we can thoroughly recommend it – wonderful bird life, beautiful lakes, surf beaches just 10 minutes away, great place for families, kayaking, bushwalking, canoeing – and dragon boating (if they get a boat of their own)!

Reminder

Registrations should be in already (if you don't want to miss out) for:

- January 19th - Twilight Paddle (free);
- February 24th Chinese New Year Sports racing (\$25)
- February 25th Chinese New Year DA racing (\$35);
- February 24th Chinese New Year Banquet (\$45);

Plus you need to book quickly for Mar 24th State Titles; April 5th-8th Nationals; and don't forget to register for Abreast in Australia, Caloundra 27th-30th September.

Opportunity of a Lifetime for Juniors

Know any kids between 12 and 18 who'd like the chance to wear the green and gold? No experience necessary! It's not as crazy as it sounds.

DBNSW is trying very hard to find and develop some junior dragon boaters to form a State Junior Dragon Boat team. Training will be provided and if they win at the Nationals they will then get to represent Australia in September at the World Championships wearing the green and gold. How many sports would give them that opportunity? They'd be in the right place at the right time because the sport is so young and there's relatively little competition at the junior level. Sounds too easy – they'd be mad to miss it! Think through your neighbours, grandkids, friends' kids etc and see if any of them are smart enough to grab the opportunity. Pam Bell's grandson is giving it a go and so is Claire Hendy's daughter, Georgie, but they still need more.

Our own Carol Fentoullis is sweeping the juniors when they train. Contact Carol for more details on carolfent@hotmail.com

Non-paddlers, Partners and Older Kids Needed

Sick of being told what to do by your family and friends? Now they can tell other people what to do for a change - by volunteering as race officials at Chinese New Year and the State and National Titles. Isn't it time they knew more about your dragon boating? If you can persuade them to volunteer with the organizing at these regattas they will feel more involved in the sport you love, the whole event will run more smoothly and so be more fun – plus you will have someone to brag to on the way home. Contact Sue McClelland on sue.mc@bigpond.com.au.

Volunteers needed in Caloundra

Here's a great opportunity for your family members!

The call has gone out for expressions of interest from anyone who is keen to help out (you can't on the Saturday or Sunday if you are planning to paddle though). What a great opportunity for your family members to get involved – especially if they have special skills – eg interpreters, bus driving licence holders, photographers, first aiders, sweeps, race marshals and officials, media, security, hospitality, merchandising etc. The application form is on our Group email site with full details of what they are looking for.

Hopefully by now you have all either registered already or are about to register for this fantastic survivor festival – “Abreast in Australia” in Caloundra in September. If not, do get a move on and do it NOW – you'll kick yourself if you miss it! Re accommodation, there are zillions of places to stay in Caloundra, or if you want to stay with the Sydney mob, contact me on cynthi-agkuiper@yahoo.com and I'll try to help.

DASydney Group Email Policy

The purpose of this policy is to restrict the number of emails sent via the Yahoo group site to those emails dealing essentially with DASydney matters.

Acceptable emails include all membership matters as well as information and social emails directed to all or part of the membership as part of their membership of DASydney (eg. Birthdays, congratulations, social news when away from Sydney).

Not acceptable are requests for fundraising or fundraising events that are not specifically for DASydney. There are opportunities for non-DASydney events to be verbally communicated after paddling sessions and over coffee.

Information about breast cancer and other breast cancer-related activities should be directed to the Coordinator so that information flow is not done on an ad hoc basis and can

also be passed on to other groups where appropriate.

Christmas Round-Up

Remember those gifts you received at Christmas that were not quite “you”? (Maybe you have a drawer full of them?) Well, someone else might just love them! So, why not give them to Gael Ellis, our Fundraising Coordinator? Gael is keen to collect such treasures to help with our fundraising - you'll be doing DASydney (and therefore yourself) a favour. You can contact Gael on gale@bigpond.com.au.

Money or the Bench

By now you should all be used to the idea that regatta bookings must be paid well in advance. This is particularly important for Chinese New Year (24th & 25th February) and for the Nationals (5th – 8th April) as both events require us to book and pay for crew entries a long time in advance. With more and more paddlers at regattas these days it's becoming difficult to fit everyone into the programme – so late bookings risk missing out completely.

As I write this (between Christmas and New Year) we are already under pressure to finalise our Chinese New Year bookings and I just KNOW some of you want to paddle but still haven't committed. And commitment means handing in your money already. We no longer have the luxury of paying on the day and just fitting everyone in. You all know the routine – name and event on the envelope with your money. So do it NOW!

Milestones

We've a good haul of birthdays in January kicking off with Wendy Mann on New Year's Day; then Angie Aston on 4th, Wendy Jensen on 6th, Jo Fizell on 13th (at the Tacoma regatta), Gael Ellis on 16th, Sally Lynch on 21st, Pam Telfer on 22nd, Eugenia Raftos on 24th, Lyn Alcock on 26th and Di Williams on 30th. Happy Birthday to all!

Paddles Up!
Cynth

DAS CALENDAR 2007

Date(s)	Event	Location	Details
January 2007			
Thu 4th	First DASydney paddle of the New Year	Banks St, Pyrmont	
Sat 13th	Tacoma Regatta	Tacoma River, Wyong	Registrations closed
Fri 19th	Twilight Paddle	Blackwattle Bay, Bank St	Register NOW!
February 2007			
Fri 2nd	DASydney Craft Group – Scrapbooking Day	Pymble	WIP or new project – contact Robin Shoebridge on rsho3799@bigpond.net.au
Sat 24th	DASydney Bargain Shopping Tour	Factory Outlet shopping trip	Dependent upon sufficient numbers committing.
Sat 24th	DASydney Chinese New Year Banquet	Chinatown	All DA paddlers welcome. Booking form on the group email site. Enquiries Kathryn Piniero on sergkat@hotmail.com
24th - 25th	Chinese New Year	Darling Harbour	Entries should be in NOW! Saturday sports racing, Sunday DA Challenge and DA Hospital Challenge
March 2007			
Sat 10th	DASydney Newbies Day	Banks St, Pyrmont	Prior registration required - phone Cynthia on 9449 6855
Sat 24th	DBNSW: NSW State Titles	Penrith SIRC	
April 2007			
5th – 8th	AusDBF: Australian National Titles	Penrith SIRC	2 days of state team racing and 2 days of club racing
June 2007			
Sun 24th	DASydney family bike ride	TBA	Bring the family and a picnic, you can hire bikes there.
July 2007			
Fri 20th TBC	DASydney Changers and Supper Fashion Parade		Date and Venue to be confirmed
September 2007			
19th – 23rd	IDBF: World Dragon Boat Championships	Penrith SIRC	We'll need lots of competitors and lots of volunteers
27th – 30th	IPDBC: Abreast in Australia Dragon Boat Festival	Kawana Lakes, Sunshine Coast, QLD	Small place – not too soon to book accommodation in Caloundra now – or for your partners to help as volunteers
November 2007			
Sat 24th	DASydney Christmas Party	TBA	Well, you wanted to know well ahead of time!