

Dragons Abreast Sydney

Sydney Coordinator – Cynthia Kuiper
PO Box 133, Pyrmont NSW 2009
Ph: 9449 6855
Email: cynthiagkuiper@yahoo.com



Happy New Year, everyone!

Let's hope it's a wonderfully healthy year for us all and one in which we can spread the word about Dragons Abreast to heaps more breast cancer survivors who don't yet realize the fun they are missing! Howzat resolution list coming along? Paddling topped the list, I bet, for lots of you. Hope you all had a lovely Christmas break because now it's ...

Time to Paddle off the Pud

As you prayed for a gantry crane to lift you groaning and stuffed from the Christmas table did you try to kid yourself that all those yummy Christmas delicacies really do go into a separate stomach that doesn't make you fat? Dream on. Just think, when the heat of the midday sun melts into one of those lovely long summer evenings you could be paddling in the Twilight Regatta on January 20th. What better way to paddle off the pud? You have signed up for that, haven't you?

And there's the Wyong Regatta on January 14th – Team Captain, Anne Gates, says we still need more paddlers so we can enter a second crew.

While you're filling out regatta entries, don't forget to put in your Chinese New Year entry now as well – every single paddler needs

Chinese New Year 2005



to be there that weekend (February 11 and 12). Not just for the paddling fun either – who can ignore that sea of pink!

Just by being there we advertise that there is indeed life after breast cancer; our sheer

numbers will put a face to the BC statistics and remind onlookers to be BC-aware – so if even one extra person is reminded to go for their mammogram and gets an earlier diagnosis, then we will have been a force for good!

Boo Hoo! We're losing Mel

Guess it's the end of a lovely era and we always knew it was going to happen one day, but still it's sad for DASydney that our much-loved coach, Melanie Cantwell, has decided to retire from coaching us all. Without Mel DASydney probably would never have got off the ground. Almost every paddle session since we started in early 03 Mel has been there to encourage us, coach us, and persuade us to stretch ourselves to unimaginable feats.

She's been there with us for all our firsts: our first paddles; our first races; our first parties; our first state championships; our first national championships; our first world championships – and a million times in between her cheery face has been up there in the front of the boat telling us all how wonderful we are (even at the outset, when Blind Freddy could see we were quite hopeless) and trying to turn us into proper paddlers.

There simply aren't enough hours in the day, even for a little dynamo like Mel, so something had to give. She's President of the state dragon boating body, DBNSW; Technical Director of the Australian Dragon

Boat Federation; a key member of the 2007 World Dragon Boat Championships organising committee; as well as working full time, paddling for Pacific Dragons and trying to fit in a life.

We certainly hope that she'll keep in touch and we'll see her sometimes on the water and at regattas. If we are really lucky, she'll come out with us occasionally and tell us again how wonderful we are (in case we forget).

Knowing this would happen, the committee implemented coach development plans a while back.

Jo Petterson is an old hand at coaching, but will only be occasionally available since she's taking on the role of Masters Womens coach jointly with Jenny for the state this year. Last year Carol Fentoullis was the first of our girls to sit the DB coaching course and then in December Jenny Petterson, Anne Gates, Deb Read, Fairlie Stanish; Karen Sykes, Jacque Robinson and I all did the course as well. That doesn't automatically make us wonderful coaches, but it's a great start and will mean that we can hopefully have a coach on each boat at practice sessions.



Melanie Cantwell

Sloths' Regatta at Penrith.

First Saturday in December two boatloads of us hiked out to Penrith for the day. It was Jasmen Shabazova's first time racing and, being at the Olympic site, it must have been an awesome experience for her and one that her family back in Azerbaijan would find hard to imagine. The conditions on the water were fairly hairy with gusty, flukey winds building up as the day progressed. This made life particularly difficult for the sweeps so some races were a long time lining up. As always, the paddling was exciting and in a gripping Women's A Final Mel's Belles came in a splendid 5th, just 0.68secs behind Sloths B. Pink Passion was already down at the starting line for their minor final when the regatta was called off for safety reasons. Sob !

It was first day back on the water for Carol Fentoullis after her operation and she drummed up a storm for Mel's Belles. Pink Passion also paddled remarkably well to Jo Cantwell's drumbeat. Just before she left on yet another trip to China, Fairlie Stanish sent me this report on her day at the Penrith Regatta;

The international regatta centre at Penrith is such a beautiful venue. Since the Olympics the trees have really begun to look established and I was looking forward to being on a marked course for racing – after being at Roseville a few weeks ago (another really beautiful venue – we're so lucky to have all these great places to practise our sport!)

Arriving at 9 am, it was soon apparent that it was windy! In the stand I was ferretting in my wheelie bag (yes, my other name is "the bag lady") for that long sleeved zip up top I was sure I'd packed that morning –but I hadn't. No worries, another t shirt did the trick!

Our first race was the Mel's Belles heat 1 and tension was rising... I had two races to go as a sweep, before I could become accredited and I was hoping to complete these today. Warmups, then lineups. Race plans running through our heads. Finally loading up and now we were really aware of the windy conditions. We'd seen previous heats take up to 20 minutes before getting lined up for an equal start. The boats were crammed together for loading, blowing into one another sideways. No time to think about it. Load up!

Now we were heading up to the start line. Lane 2. Although it had been planned to be a



Mel's Belles coming home just behind Sloths B with Fairlie Stanish sweeping and Carol Fentoullis drumming

Three Cheers for our New DASydney Head Coach



We are absolutely delighted that Carol Fentoullis has very kindly (because it means she will hardly ever get to paddle) agreed to take on the demanding role of DASydney Head Coach for the year. The other coaches among us will help Carol as we all work towards our coaching certification. It's going to be a big ask, because some of us will also need to sweep a fair bit even though we'd really like to also keep up our paddling capability – but there isn't a paddler in the club who doesn't owe a lot to DASydney, so it's a great way of giving something back. Many of you will already have been in a boat with Carol coaching so you will appreciate her natural flair for the job. Let's give her all the support we can and show her what we already know – We Can Do Anything! Thanks heaps, Carol.



Our girls who paddled pink at Penrith.

pontoon start, the pontoon hadn't materialised, so we were instructed to bring all boats up together to the start line. Luckily the wind died off a touch as we did this and we got our start after just a few minutes of toing and froing. I thought the starter did a great job of recognising the right time to get us going in this semi-lull. 200 metres is just a little over a minute but the race seemed longer as we went through our plan to the end. How well everyone paddled! It was so exciting and we did really well to come 2nd in our heat. Next race saw DAS battling for position. It was a close race between all six boats but DAS maintained a good pace and crossed fifth.

One heat down, one heat to go... In the meantime, the pontoon had been positioned but the comp. was running way behind schedule, mainly because of the wind delaying the starts. The organisers made a decision – no

second heats, but there would be an A, B and C final so everyone would get another paddle.

By the time Mel's Belles set out for the start line in the A final (yes, the A final - didn't that feel great, given the age of our competition!), the wind was even more blustery. What's a pontoon start? Oh yes, someone holds the back of the boat in position for the start, that's right! I never realised that this meant no room for a sweep oar in the water. It was up to the paddlers to keep the boat straight at the start line. Everyone responded really well when asked to draw – a tiring exercise - and the boats lined up a couple of times before we got away... It was hard sweeping to keep the line as we raced to the finish but we made good time in a competitive race, coming 5th.

Ours was the last official race though... it was too windy to continue the programme. What disappointment - (shades of Connell's



DASydney girls finishing well with Cynthia sweeping and Jo Cantwell drumming



DASydney crew after the demo race with Zeus at the helm

Point) – but next thing DASydney is asked to do a paddle past the grandstand so everyone can cheer us! Yes, we'd like to do that, with Zeus at the sweep oar – and no, the DASydney boat didn't have a drummer there, so I could drum! Off we set and two other teams joined us – one was Bei Loon and I'm not sure of the other. However, we didn't stop at the grandstand but went straight up to the start line and soon we were off in an unofficial race! I was beating the drum hard, blood was racing, muscles were straining and Zeus was managing the boat expertly like it was a match box toy! ... the finish line coming up... More, more, more... Paddles out! We'd won! Magnificent! Thanks for letting me on the boat as a ring-in! It was a real thrill.

Of course, the day was far more than the racing. Lots of chatting, lots of yummies – I specially remember Eugenia's "pretzels" (sweet) and who brought the great slice? I can't remember, but I do recall how well it went down! Then there was Annie Gatesy's coffee... Thanks Anne – must be one of the most enjoyable coffees I've ever had!

Despite the shortened programme I had a wonderful day. It's really good to have time to get to know paddling people a bit better and personally I just love being outdoors among the wonderful community that is dragonboating. Thanks everyone who did the organising – DASydney, Sloths, DBNSW and everyone else. I know it takes time and effort but I LOVED the day.

PS I'm hoping to get off my P plates now, but haven't heard yet! What's the next challenge?



Above: Brenda congratulating Elaine Beggs after the heat – and don't the new shirts look great!

Below: Barbara Lane and Elaine Beggs in the stand at Penrith



Relaxing on the lawn at Penrith

BOOBS - Bringing Out Our Best Skills

Scrapbooking has been a huge hit with DASydney's crafty girls and Robin Shoebridge is the doyenne of scrapbooking. Under duress to "do it again", she's filed this report for January:

Hi, all..... I've finally got a date that just might suit us all for our next BOOBS Scrapbooking Fun Day. Thursday, 19 January 2007, between 9.30am and 10.00am to whenever. Yep, I know it's a few weeks off, however it'll come round really quickly. For those of you doing a paddling session that night at Pyrmont, you're quite welcome to bring your gear and leave from my place and go straight to training. Please reconfirm if you can make it that day and I'll start getting things organised. 11 People! My goodness, I'll really have to get my act together. Can't take any more people. Please, please remember - this is a fun day, we do chat a lot - just ask those who've taken part before. You'll need to bring a sense of humour, 3 photos of a summer theme (you might need to cut up 1 or 2 of these photos so bring a copy if you think you might like to keep them uncut), your coffee mug and some lunch - we do take photos, so beware!! Looking forward to hearing from you, either by email or by phone (9520-7793) or at a paddling session. Robin.

DASydney's Craft Group Xmas Party

After seeing the incredible paddle cake they made for the DASydney Christmas party you would have to know that the BOOBS Exchange Christmas party (can't have too many parties!) would be a cake decorating extravaganza under the tutelage of the twins, Jenny and Jo Petterson. You can also imagine the dismay this Two Thumbs felt at the outset upon seeing the exquisite spray of delicately

coloured fondant roses, fuschias and whatever that they had handmade for Jenny's wedding cake.

Thank heavens Jo and Jenny didn't have anything nearly that complicated in mind for us. In fact they had done half the hard work for us already, that is, making the darned fondant and colouring it. All we had to do was to roll out the green stuff and cut out little holly leaves, make them a bit more realistic with some vein markings and drape them over ball-point pen barrels so they dried curved. Then we pinched off little blobs of red stuff and rolled them up to make holly berries – hey, just like play dough – easy peasy and good fun, I thought! But what was the white stuff for? Oh dear – that was for making little flowers! Have you ever seen fat-petalled, chubby flowers before? Well I have now, but if you only glance at them quickly they could look just like from a (not very good) shop. However, all assembled with a touch of ribbon it actually looked relatively OK – well, OK enough for my sons to tease me with "Hey Mum, what are the white blobs supposed to be?"



New Chinese New Year Rules

Well the next challenges might be the Wyong or the Twilight regatta but the next BIG challenge will be sorting out who races where and when at Chinese New Year, which is why we need your entries NOW. We've always known that "sometime soon" the 80/20 racing rule would be dropped and now, just for CNY, it has! Chinese New Year 2006 will be the first time we've been required to field 100% BC survivor crews when paddling under the DASydney name. This will bring us into line with Internationally Abreast practice and will be the future for BC survivor paddling, probably starting next season.

Supporters will still race with DASydney, in our sporting crews – and under a new, non-gender-specific crew name (possibly, and this is just the latest suggestion) dasZLERS (instead of Mel's Belles)!

Who'll be Paddling Where at CNY?

Longer term paddlers will already know that some girls will be paddling in composite boats at Chinese New Year. There are never exactly 20, 40 or 60 paddlers registered for regattas, so to ensure everyone still gets a go, we make up composite crews with paddlers from other DA clubs. That is, some girls from DASydney will inevitably be teamed up with some from other DA clubs to make a full crew of 20. All of us paddle in composite boats on occasions and they are good fun! They are also a great opportunity to meet girls from all over the country. At this stage we don't know who will be paddling in what crews and that is why you need to get your entry forms in ASAP, so we can start the huge task of allocating places. We will then pass on some DASydney names to the DA State Coordinator, Vivienne Gregg, who will put together the composite teams.

Roll out the Welcome Mat

Know you'll all welcome Jennifer Petroni, Jo Cantwell and Margaret Davis into the DASydney fold. All three have joined in the last month, just in time to enjoy the most exciting months in our paddling calendar. Golly – we've over 90 members now!! Should be able to field at least four boats at Chinese New Year if everyone joins in (so sign up now!!!)

Milestones

What a month for birthdays (no Big Os) – take a big breath before trying to blow out all these!:

Wendy Mann's first up on New Year's Day; then Julia Smailes on the 3rd; Angie Aston on the 4th; Margaret Puddick on the 6th; Jo Fizell on the 13th; Gael Ellis on the 16th; Sally Lynch and Sharron Mitchell on the 21st; Pam Telfer on the 22nd; Eugenia Raftos on the 24th; and Dianne Williams on the 30th. Happy Birthday to all of you.

Chinese New Year Raffles

Any day now we'll be announcing our raffles for Chinese New Year – we've dug up some phenomenal prizes and want you all to sell squillions of tickets before the Banquet!! Ooooooh – that divine pair of 18 carat white gold, amethyst and diamond earrings hand crafted and donated by Phil Gibson (Sue's husband) would be just my colouring and could surely conjure up the full \$2000 worth of distraction from the wrinkles (sigh!). The Jurlique cosmetic basket might be wasted on my tired old visage (think Komodo dragon with freckles

New Post-Paddling Coffee/Brekky Venue

To encourage more of you to join the post-paddling coffee/brekkies we have now discovered a lovely new coffee shop in walking distance - so you can leave your car in the parking lot in Banks St (free and no parking ticket). It's called Studio 4.

To get there you turn right out of the parking lot and take the first left up the hill and then first right. Studio 4 is at the end of that street. It's a lovely cafe in the Channel 10 complex. Let's hope more of you will be able to join us from now on!



– not a pretty sight) but I'd love to rustle up another three people for the weekend at the luxury 4.5 star Elm Cottage in the Snowy Mountains. The sailing would be wasted on me, I'm afraid, coz I get seasick but the dinner for four at Sydney's newest venue, Fino, would be super cool.

Can you believe there's over \$4000 in prizes to be won – and that's only the main raffle. (Prize for who sells the most tickets – let us know when you want more books) There is another amazing raffle open only to banquet attendees – great odds on winning in that one, but it's a surprise!

Final Reminders

Write these dates in your diaries now – you need to set aside both Saturday 11th Feb and Sunday 12th February – when you aren't paddling we'll need you volunteering with the marshalling (remember this sport is run by the

paddlers – that's US – there is no magic "them" organizing things! So we all need to pitch in).

There are still a few places left for our Chinese New Year Banquet on Saturday 11th February – if you haven't booked yet, the form is on the group email site or contact me if you need a copy.

Ditto the forms for the CNY race entries and for the Mum-in-a-Boat race entry. **Send us those entry forms NOW!** Bookings are also open now for State Titles entries – don't be put off by the words "State Titles" – we ALL go in them, even the novices. So put March 25th in your diaries too!

There's a packed paddling program between now and Easter – mark out all the dates in your diary, get your entries in early and just think how fit you could be by then, just from having fun!!

Paddles Up!
Cynth...

DAS CALENDAR 2006.2007

Date(s)	Event	Location	Details
January 2006 Sat 14th	Regatta	Wyong River, Tacoma, Central Coast	Register now with DASydney Team Captain, Anne Gates on jabberwocky@myaccess.com.au – car pooling where possible.
Thu 19th	DASydney Craft Group - scrapbooking	Engadine	Booked out
Fri 20th	Twilight Regatta	Banks St., Pyrmont	6pm sharp – register now with Team Captain, Anne Gates on jabberwocky@myaccess.com.au
Sat 28th	Erg trials	Banks St., Pyrmont	For everyone who wants a go – must reserve place with Team Captain, Anne Gates
February 2006 W/E 11th /12th	Chinese New Year Dragon Boat Festival	Darling Harbour	PLEEZ put both days in your diary now!!! (volunteering and/or paddling)
Sat 11th	Chinese New Year Banquet	Regal Restaurant, Chinatown	This will be huuuuge! Book now! Contact DASydney Social Events Coordinator Margo-Lynne Lee for booking details on shortsandie@hotmail.com.
Wed 15th	Hornsby Zonta	Hornsby	Guest speaker: Cynthia Kuiper
Sat 25th	DASydney Open Day for Newbies	Banks St Pyrmont	Reservations required: cynthiakuiper@yahoo.com
March 2006 Sat 25th	2006 NSW State Dragon Boat Titles	Penrith, SIRC	Lodge entries now
Sat 11th – Sun 12th	Annual Canberra Festival Dragon Boat Regatta	Lake Burley Griffin	TBA
April 2006 Fri 14th – Sun 16th	2006 AusDBF National Dragon Boat Titles (at Easter)	Nagambie Lakes, Victoria	Not just for paddling tragics – for novices too! For accommodation, contact: Nagambie Lakes Visitor Centre ph: 03 5794 2647 www.nagambielakestourism.com.au
August 2006 11th – 13th	World Club Crew Championships	Toronto, Canada	DASydney Training Squad selection after the Nationals
September 2007 20th – 23rd	World Dragon Boat Championships	Penrith SIRC	We'll need lots of competitors and lots of volunteers
28th - 31st	Internationally Abreast Dragon Boat Festival	Kawana Lakes, Sunshine Coast, QLD	Small place – not too soon to book accommodation now