

Dragons Abreast Sydney

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Christmas is Coming – bring pressies

Are you coming! It's our Christmas Party on Saturday November 19 at Eugenia Raftos' place. It's no charge, just bring a plate and BYO drinks – ring Eugenia (on 9663 1110) who is coordinating who brings what and be prepared to feast! Don't miss it! Hopefully Deb Read will be there, barbequing Haloumi again – yum! And can we bear the suspense of waiting to see what mouth-watering treat Sophie will bring this year? Partners are welcome. Oh yes – and please bring a little wrapped gift (no more than \$10) for a Kris Kringle.

Spring Racing Fashion

Makybe Diva may be the darling of the Spring Racing Carnival but they ain't seen nuthin' till they've seen DASydney turn out in their new team colours (first race in the new colours was at Roseville last weekend!) Brenda Owen, our Merchandising Miracleworker, tactfully negotiated her way through a veritable minefield of competing suggestions re fabric, design, cut, colour, logo etc. to come up with a rashie that everyone just loves.

There were wild scenes of great undress and abandon in the parking lot at Pyrmont as Bren unpacked and distributed the first shipment of these new shirts, with girls everywhere flinging off their clothes to be first into the new gear. Special tributes to Brenda for surviving the slings and arrows of that whole delicate exercise!



Look at us – all kitted out



Here's Brenda hamming it up in her new shirt



Parading the new shirts – with Neil Millgate looking on and wondering what he'll wear.



DASydney girls in Adelaide with their silver medals

Bling! Bling! In Adelaide

The following weekend was the Australian Masters Games in Adelaide and I hated not being there – I was tied up with a family wedding in Colorado. Fortunately Jo Fizell persuaded 14 of our DASydney girls to head for the City of Churches. But 14 was not enough to fill a boat, so Jo liaised with Jan Skorich from Canberra DA's Tickled Pink crew (also a few paddlers short of a crew) and they all piled in together to paddle as a combined Dragons Abreast in the 20s, while our girls paddled as Mel's Belles in the 10s.

Jo did a fabulous job sorting out the confusing conflicts between the Masters' rules and the DAA rules and what we could and could not do there – I think it's given her a very keen appreciation of the loaded problems our Team Captain, Anne Gates, wrestles with so successfully at regattas. Here's Jo's description of the first day of racing in Adelaide:

Friday began with roll call at 8am on the beautiful grassy banks of the sparkling Torrens Lake. Weather was perfect with clear skies and a light breeze. Inside the tents there was a real hive of activity and a happy pre-race buzz of expectation as paddlers made ready.

Jo Petterson skillfully organised the crew

for each race, balancing the 80/20 rule and still everyone had more races than I ever expected was possible. Jo also had several race techniques to assist us improving our times each event.

Our first race with the combined team of DASydney and ACT's Tickled Pink was a bit of a mismatch against the pumped up muscle-bound Royal Australian Navy and highly competitive Sea Sonix, another male team. We were well beaten but as a training run it real-

ly stirred our feathers for the more evenly matched events that followed.

Motivated by a 10 sec improvement in the next race we powered our way to a silver and bronze medal by the day's end. It really was a great day and left us all on a big high for the wonderful dinner at the Sea Rescue Squadron clubhouse. This was all kindly arranged by the South Australian Warriors team and was a most enjoyable experience of Southern hospitality.



DASydney and the Tickled Pink girls at Adelaide's beautiful Torrens Lake



Mel's Belles in Adelaide – Back: Jo Fizell, Fran O'Brien, Tracey Bowne, Pam Bell, Vicki McLean, Jenny and Jo Petterson, Front: Angie Aston, Bobbie Fox, Sue Gibson, Jacquie Robinson, Karen Sykes, Helen Westwood.

Angie Aston had this to share about the second day:

Just want you all to know what a fabulous time we had in Adelaide! The camaraderie was wonderful, the weather fantastic and we came back with medals!! My friends who joined us for dinner on Saturday night were still laughing the next morning at the jokes etc from our group (and in addition to Helen's chocolates, ask about Canestan!!).

Can't thank Jo Fizell enough for encouraging us and arranging everything – it all was beautifully planned and everyone had a super time. The list of contact numbers for everyone was great too, it meant that we didn't feel alone when we arrived in Adelaide – the team was only a phone call away. Thanks, thanks, thanks Jo – I know it was difficult sitting in Sydney trying to work on the logistics and paperwork while so many of us were off having such fun in Berlin.

It was particularly special when we almost beat the South Australian Dragons Abreast team – the Vipers; however it wasn't to be. We lost by a whisker (well actually a Dragon's nostril is more like it), but it almost felt better (not quite though) than gold when the Vipers admitted to us that they'd never come up against such competition before – we'll beat them in Nagambi won't we?

Jo Petterson, your sweeping, your words of encouragement, your tactics, your dogged determination to make sure every member of the team had as many chances as possible to paddle were greatly appreciated. However I think we'll need to camouflage Jacquie for the next event or she's in danger of being "adopted" by a number of other teams.

Oh yes, and the chocolate story – we all had dinner together in Adelaide on the last night at a very posh restaurant (North) at Sky Centre - part of the casino complex. We had vouchers for "buy one main course, get one free", so decided to lash out and have entrees and dessert as well. Such delectable selections as: Cointreau creme Caramel with a warm

strawberry & lemon compote; or white chocolate, lavender and honeycomb mousse with crystallised violets; or steamed banana pudding with a caramelised banana, butterscotch and double cream; and I could go on – mouth-watering aren't they?

Helen Westwood decided to be rash and ordered the Haighs Chocolate Selection served with a hazelnut latte. The selection proved to be a bit thin – in fact there were just 3 tiny little chocolates served – they looked very lonely on the plate and Helen and the rest of us had difficulty containing ourselves we were laughing so hard. The only silver lining in the cloud would be that Helen couldn't possibly have felt guilty!

And Canestan, that story is for Helen to tell – however our "catchcry" would be "we're itching to paddle!"

Well I've now been paddling for just one year, and I've already represented Australia overseas and competed in a National Masters event – I wonder how many other unimagined sporting firsts are in front of me. Thanks to Dragons Abreast Sydney – it's been a fantastic ride so far, I'm so glad I joined!

A Virgin Racer in Adelaide

Vicki McLean couldn't believe her luck when, as a new paddler, she joined the gang in Adelaide for the Masters Games. Here are her words of advice to other new paddlers:

Early this year I saw an article in the SMH about Dragons Abreast and joined as a supporter. My first paddle was in April and I was warmly welcomed into the DASydney family. When the Masters Games was first discussed I never thought that I would attend, yet alone win medals there.

The notice about the Masters came and a few were talking about it. "Are you coming?" "I wouldn't be good enough for that" I said. "Are you over 40?" (Must have had the sun in their eyes!) The enthusiasm was infectious. Before I knew it I found myself registered to compete in the Masters Games. An elite athlete at last!

So how did it go? It was fantastic. On competition days everyone was keen to do what was best for the team – position in boat, sitting out, drumming, filling in for another DA team. Once the starter's pistol went we combined our individual strength and whoosh!

Best Thing: Almost everything – strong women, laughter, cooperation, competing and winning, partners cheering us on, changing and not caring about standing about in underwear, sunny days and of course – the medals.

Worst thing: Not having a camera to catch Helen's expression when her chocolate dessert arrived.

So for all of you who think – oh, I could never do that – you can! This wonderful group gives you a chance to achieve things you never thought you could. I learned a lot and hope that my paddling has improved. I did try to keep my arm straight, Mel.

Special thanks to Jo F and Jo P for all their efforts and to all my team mates for making my first competitive event so rewarding. Nagambie here I come!



Vipers pipping DAS by a dragon's nostril at the finish



Canadians at the Worlds

The New Paddle Technique

Anyone who's been paddling the last few weeks will know that Mel has us tackling a different paddle technique this season. It's the straight arm technique that all the teams (except us) were using in Berlin. It feels pretty strange till you get used to it and may play havoc with some people's cervical spine, so take it easy at first. That said, when you get the hang of it, while it shortens the stroke if you're not careful, it certainly seems to deliver more power with each stroke.

I found this picture of the Canadian team which shows what Mel is wanting us to do – notice how far forward they are leaning over their front leg (giving them incredible length at the front of the stroke), some serious rotation happening and look at those straight elbows! Be inspired!

Guest Paddling in Canberra

One of the great traditions and enormous benefits of belonging to Dragons Abreast is the ability to find a warm welcome when visiting other survivor groups around the world. We've had lots of overseas survivors come and paddle with us and I paddled with the girls in Singapore when I visited there. This last month one of our newer members, Elaine Beggs, discovered the joy of arranging to drop in for a paddle when she joined the Tickled Pink team in Canberra on the weekend of the DA Challenge Regatta:

Here is a photo from last Sunday's DA Challenge Regatta in Canberra – I am second row on the rhs of the boat. (the one with the pro-lapsed feather in her cap). I was so excited sitting so far up in the boat and worked hard to keep up the stroke. One of my daughters thought that our tactic of 'blinding' the competition was a good ploy. It was Sunday 23 October 2005 A glorious day in Canberra and lovely location at Lotus Bay, Yarralumla on the shores of beautiful Lake Burleigh Griffin. There were 30 teams participating and costumes and enthusiasm was running high. Breakfast BBQ and home made cake stall kept everyone's energy levels up. There was a tent for our group which included Merimbula DA, Illawarra DA and Canberra and me from Sydney. Lovely bunch of people and we had a great time. 'Jacobs Supporting Abreast' were the overall winners and received the Pink Lady Shield, a perpetual trophy kindly donated by Brendan Smyth MLA.



What We'd Figured Already

A recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association looked at 2,987 female nurses who were diagnosed with stage I, II, or III breast cancer between 1984 and 1998; these women were followed up until June 2002 through self-reported questionnaires. The research demonstrated that women who engaged in activities equivalent to brisk walking for three to five hours per week were able to improve their survival rate by 44-50%!

This is exciting news! It supports the idea that you do not need to engage in an overwhelming amount of exercise to see health improvements, including increased rates of survival for women with breast cancer. In fact, the improvements in survival rates leveled off for women who did more (so you don't have to absolutely thrash yourself paddling to get the benefit). The take home message from this study: Get moving! Just 30 to 45minutes a day of activity can improve your health, quality of life, and chance of survival.

Miriam E. Nelson, Ph.D.

Reference: M. D. Holmes et al., Journal of the American Medical Association, May 25, 2005.



Wilma, Carol and Robin scooped up all the raffle prizes on the day

Racing at Connell's Point

With the regatta season underway a boatload of DAsydney girls headed to the beautiful Connell's Point, south of Sydney, for a day's racing. What a delight to be joined by our first Canadian visitor of the season, Bec Simnor, from the River Spirit survivor team in Campbell River, British Columbia. Racing aside, DAsydney turned out to be the biggest winners on the day with Wilma Kippers, Carol Fentoullis and Robin Shoebridge taking first, second and third prizes respectively in the Mavericks' raffle.

Media Tarts

Many of our members have been busy in October with a multitude of Breast Cancer Month activities. However we have managed a few instances where we have been able to promote Dragons Abreast specifically. Di Ryall spoke at the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation Ball to 800 attendees. There was pink everywhere and she spoke about treatments, the need for research and how breast cancer changes your approach to life. She made sure DA got a solid plug. Margo-Lynne Lee was invited to speak to the RPAH staff about Dragons Abreast (and she has reported back that there is already talk about the RPAH crew for the BC Specialists dragon boat race at Chinese New Year in February).

A cautionary tale

Once upon a time there was a girl called Cynthia who loved Teddy Bears so decided to go to the "BOOBS EXCHANGE" to learn how to make her own. Margot showed her all about bear making and the result was a cute cream "Hang-a-Bear". Cynthia took her bear home and put it in her bedroom where she would put it in different poses (a very flexible Bear!). Cynthia also owned a dog, a very big dog, called Mica. Now Mica is allowed in her house but NOT IN HER BEDROOM!!

One day whilst Cynthia was out training, Mica was bored so decided to explore in places he knew he was not allowed and found "the bear". Now to a dog, who had lots of toys to play with, this was a new "toy" so he took it outside and proceeded to have some fun. Now big dogs have big teeth and after a while the "bear" looked decidedly shabby and somewhat torn, so Mica decided to bury it, after all that's what dogs do, bury things!

Poor Cynthia did not know what had happened to her bear, but also as dogs do, Mica retrieved the bear and took it into a horrified Cynthia. To see the bear in this state was just too much for her and after telling Mica what a "BAD DOG" he was she took the bear and soaked it in Nappy San (wonderful stuff for getting out stubborn stains), washed it several times and then decided to "fess up" to Margot to see what could be done. The bear was then taken to "bear hospital" where Margot performed intricate surgery on various parts of its body, sewed it up again and gave it a brand new face.

It does not end there, "M & M" (Margot and Margo-Lynne for the uninitiated) decided to take a photo of the "bear" hanging on a paddle in Papyrus grass at the training site. (photo) Whilst setting it up, Margot's car key fell in the grass - ever tried working your way through that stuff to retrieve something? Finally Key was found, phew! and Robin took the ensuing snaps to go along with this little saga. Now you can all view the "before and after" shots of this very much loved Bear, and as you can see, one restored bear, but certainly not the same one as before, however Cynthia was happy with the result and harmony is restored in the household.

Moral of this story: Hang-a-Bears are supposed to "hang", on door knobs or similar but in this case, perhaps it should be well out of reach of Mica. Cynthia you have been warned!

The writer of this tale has no idea if Cynthia named her bear so is asking for suggestions.



Cynthia's Bear – before and after



Let's Do Lunch

What was the excuse for this indulgent Sunday lunch? Well, who needs an excuse? So October 23 found a noisy bunch of DASydney paddlers attending to their race diets (not) at The Little Snail restaurant in Pymont. There were gales of laughter at some of the silly ideas that were tossed around for a potential name or catchcry for our club (Deb Read, in her spiffy red wig, came up with dozens of loony ideas). Having decided all references to tits and boobs were off the agenda, the suggestion that brought the house down was "Harbour Hooters" – that is until Karen Sykes' brow darkened – "I think not", she growled ominously. So the search goes on.



From left: Cynthia Kuiper, Deb Read (in spiffy red wig), Kerry Enemark, Margot Case, Margo-Lynne Lee, Pam Bell, Karen Sykes, Wendy McLeod, Debbie Storey, Jacquie Robinson and Brenda Owen. Also at the lunch were Robin Shoebridge and Barbara Scharrer.



A Different Technique Altogether

The DASydney Craft Group (known as the BOOBS Exchange – don't ask!) got together again this month for more scrapbooking – it's almost as addictive as paddling! Pam Bell came along for the first time:

Having finally managed to attend a 'Boobs Craft Day' I feel I must spread the word about the fun and friendship generated at this DAS social group organised by Margo-Lynne.

The theme for the day was 'Scrapbooking' – best described as an artistic way of selecting a favoured few pictures from the photo collections we all manage to accumulate over the years, cutting them into fancy shapes and arranging them artistically on an album display page. (You can then dump the remainder of your vast collection of undated, never-to-be-seen-again old snapshots and give yourself more cupboard space!)

Nothing difficult about this I thought – like many people I'd pasted mementos into scrapbooks over the years but I had not reckoned with the eagle eye of Scrapbook Mistress Extraordinaire, Robyn Shoebridge. None of this slapdash stuff for graduates of the DAS BOOBs Club. We were encouraged – no! – expected to produce works of art worthy of hanging in the National Gallery. Preselected packs of coloured paper, beads and buttons were distributed, instruments worthy of a place in a hospital operating theatre were laid out before us on the table and the rules re colour and composition were communicated in a friendly but firm way by our very talented instructor.

Some of the seven participants had a head start; the twins, Jenny and Jo capably demonstrating their artistic genes and Cynthia, although modestly claiming ignorance, had obviously been taking secret lessons in preparation for the day. It was a forgone conclusion

that Craft Mistress Supreme, Margot-Lynne, would produce work of merit, similarly Margot, as well known for her skills with Teddy Bear Making as for seeking an Oswald. The two novices, Karen and I, soon discovered however that no short cuts were allowed as we were initiated into the mysterious world of the art of scrap booking.

Our teacher was extraordinarily patient, even while heard vehemently bellowing 'No! We NEVER EVER place photos on an angle!'. Although at all times she maintained a calm demeanor, I'm reasonably sure that at one stage I observed her surreptitiously resorting to 'Rescue Drops' and heard her muttering affirmations like "I can cope with this – I'm a strong woman!" as pitiful bleats of appeal were constantly directed to her.

After changing the composition of my page half a dozen times, I achieved a breakthrough, receiving the special dispensation of being allowed to stick something on an angle. My claims of being the 'Chosen One' were loudly howled down by the rest of the group – they seemed to think that it was only because Robyn, by this time, was a broken woman!

As may be seen, we graduated with honours, even though I have calculated that, at the rate of one page a day, it's going to take a long time to free up cupboard space. And where are we going to store all the vast amounts of tools required for our new found skill? But what a fantastic day. We not only enjoyed the beautiful views from Robyn's patio as we enjoyed our shared lunchtime with homemade cakes and scones but also lots of laughter and friendship.

I can absolutely recommend 'BOOBs Craft Days' – next one we're decorating a Christmas Cake courtesy of Jo and Jenny – just in time for Xmas! Thank you Margo-Lynne for organising these sessions and Robyn for sharing your expertise so willingly.

November Birthdays

There'll be almost New Orleans-style wind gusts of candle-blowing this month. Best wishes to Barbara Scharrer on the 4th; Fairlie Stanish on the 5th; Wendy Jensen on the 6th; Tracey Bowne on the 10th; Deb Story on the 17th; Wilma Kippers on the 21st; Margot Case on the 26th; and Cristina Frigo on the 27th. And although Geoff Eldridge now paddles with Pacific Dragons (PDs) we still wish him well for the 18th.

Roll out the Welcome Mat

Following the huge newbies day we had in September and the girls who joined right away then, in October we can now welcome a whole new bunch of new members to DASydney: Vicki Farmer, Christina Frigo, Geri Hill, Wendy Jensen, Lynne Schinella, Cathy Seddon, Julia Smailes, Bronwyn Thorncraft, and Dianne Williams. We hope you'll all get as much fun out of paddling as we do!

Reserve Feb 11th and 12th for CNY!!

You should all know (you do read the calendar on the back page every month, don't you?) that the weekend of Feb 11-12 will be all about paddling and you need to make sure you don't commit to something less fun by mistake. The Chinese New Year Dragon Boat Festival is our biggest and most inclusive event of the year. The committee is already working flat out getting plans in place for the Doctors' race, for the big Chinese Banquet on the Saturday night, and for the raffle. Please also ask your "significant others" to keep the weekend free – we're going to need lots of volunteers to help marshalling the races, manning the finish line. All good fun – but only if you're there!

Easter Essential

The other date you need to keep free is the coming Easter weekend when as many of us as possible will be off to Nagambie (just west of Melbourne) for the National Titles. You'll see more pink ladies there than you ever thought possible – make it a family affair (there are lots available family activities in the area while you will be paddling). Speak with any of the girls who've been to the nationals before and they'll tell you it's simply the best fun!! BUT – you can only paddle if you've got a place to stay. Much of the accommodation is booked already so please ring the local tourist authority there and make reservations NOW! You need to speak with the incredibly helpful Stephen Schwer on 1800 444 647.

That's all folks!
Paddles up!
Cynth...

DAS CALENDAR 2005.2006.2007

Date(s)	Event	Location	Details
November 2005			
Sat 12th	NSW Breast Cancer Institute Public Forum 2005	Westmead Hospital	12.30 – 3.10pm Free. Details www.bci.org.au . Register NOW 9265 0700 or online www.tourhosts.com.au/bcipublicforum
Sat 19th	DASydney Xmas Party	Roseberry	Contact Eugenia Raftos on phillipraftos@optusnet.com.au for details
Sat 26th	National DB Officials Course	DBNSW, Homebush	10am – 4pm
December 2005			
Sat 3rd	Sloths Regatta	Penrith, SIRC	Register with DASydney Team Captain, Anne Gates on jabberwocky@myaccess.com.au
10th – 11th	DBNSW Level 1 Dragon Boat Coaching Course	DBNSW, Homebush	By arrangement only.
January 2006			
Sat 14th	Regatta	TBA	
February 2006			
W/E 11th /12th	Chinese New Year Dragon Boat Festival	Darling Harbour	You MUST put this in your diary now!!!
Saturday 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
March 2006			
Sat 25th	2006 NSW State Dragon Boat Titles	Penrith, SIRC	
April 2006			
Fri 14th – Sun 16th (Easter)	2006 AusDBF National Dragon Boat Titles	Nagambie Lakes, Victoria	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	Crew 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 Festival	Kawana Lakes Sunshine Coast, QLD	Small place – not too soon to book accommodation now