



## DRAGONS ABREAST AUSTRALIA

ACN 104 261 029

[www.dragonsabreast.com.au](http://www.dragonsabreast.com.au)

GPO Box 1948, Darwin NT 0801

Tel: 08 8941 8923 Fax: 08 8941 0821 Mob: 0418 898 082

NEWS BULLETIN No. 5 - April 2004

Co-editors – Pat Hancock (NT) and Anna Wellings Booth (ACT)

Email: [editor\\_newsletter@dragonsabreast.com.au](mailto:editor_newsletter@dragonsabreast.com.au) - Pat

[newsletter@dragonsabreast.com.au](mailto:newsletter@dragonsabreast.com.au) – Anna



Dear Members

After the bumper issue last month we are going to try to keep this to a reasonable size. The problem of course is that we are moving along so fast, there is so much happening and so much to communicate about the national scene and group activities.

First though are a few items which fit into the 'fantastic news' category.

Further to Michelle's announcement last month on **Dele Gilmour** (Hunter Region) being awarded the inaugural Hunter Valley Steel Magnolia Award, Dele's story appears in this edition. Also in this issue is a piece on the latest achievements of **Jenny and Joanne Pettersen** (Sydney).

Congratulations are also given to **Christine Barker** (Sydney) for being awarded a 'highly commended' at the Royal Sydney Easter Show for her Terami ball depicting the Australian outback. Christine learnt the craft from her mother; Terami is an ancient Japanese art. Check out the website for a photo and more details! *Pat Hancock*

Fellow Feisty Dragons!

Thank you to the many paddlers around the clubs who have been sending messages of support to David and I over the past months. There's a Chinese proverb that says: "You can only go halfway into the darkest forest; then you are coming out the other side". Well, I'm delighted to tell you that we're both nearly out of the forest and the good humour and friendship of Dragons Abreast has greatly helped us through the jungle. So very humbly, thank you all.

Let me tell you that if you have major surgery Canberra is the place to be – the amazing crew here have kept us fed from the night I came home from Hospital and I thought this Michael Leunig poem somewhat sums up Dragons Abreast!

### WELCOME TO THE CLUB

*Suddenly, unexpectedly,  
you're in the Club*

*The club you dreaded*

*The club you mocked.*

*It's your turn now*

*You've joined the Club.*

*And then, around you,  
you begin to discover others  
who are also members of  
the club and you see a  
sweetness in them that you  
hadn't seen before.*

*And you enter into a new  
world of tell-tale signs, of  
gentle knowing looks,  
little smiles of recognition  
and fellowship; and you  
begin to see what a  
HUGE club this is...*

*...what a HUGE, OLD, STEADY, club  
this is. How tender and deep  
its wisdom; how quiet its strength;  
how gracious and consoling its motto*

*"Risis omnia – incrementus  
per dedecus – sapientia  
per damnum"  
(everything is funny – growth through  
humiliation  
and wisdom through loss)*

(From "The Stick" by Michael Leunig)

Pat is to be congratulated on her great work for the newsletter and the contributions for this edition are inspiring. Each crew is emerging with their own unique identity but yet we all share in the excitement of success and the knowledge of belonging to a national, supportive group.

Love & peace *Anna*

**Update from the Executive**

You will have noticed the catchy **Lizard** logo on the Masthead of this newsletter – I am thrilled to announce they have come on board as a major sponsor with a \$30,000 sponsorship! Lizards is the company that has supplied all the DAA merchandise apart from rashies. The sponsorship arrangement is for 12 months and I would ask that all groups include Lizards logo on everything they are producing. Lizards make a great product and can do almost anything to order!

I am pleased to announce that DAA now has a presence on the board of AusDBF as, at the recent AGM in Perth, I was the successful nominee for the position of Marketing Director. I feel this is a position that will work very well, in tandem with DAA. Full details and photo's from Perth will be included in the May newsletter.

DAA is planning to hold our AGM in Melbourne this August as many members will be attending the BCNA Conference! I highly recommend this conference to everyone as things like this do not come along regularly. You will leave feeling very enthused and empowered and it was at the First Conference (back in 1998) that the idea for Dragons Abreast was born!

Many of you have been asking me about the Spirit of Achievement Award – well, at long last here is a photograph so you can have a look see!



*Michelle & the Spirit of Achievement Award*

My thanks to all of you for your support and for the confidence you have displayed in me. It is an absolute pleasure to coordinate such a wonderful group of courages, inspirational and special people!

#### **DBNSW Individual Recognition Award**

Another great piece of news - our very own **Jenny Pettersen**, renown all round DAA with twin Joanne, has won the "DBNSW Individual Recognition Award" that is made annually and voted in by all the paddlers around NSW.

She was so surprised when she was named the winner it was a few seconds before she registered it is was indeed her. A very popular win, especially now that all DBNSW know what she has gone through and the obstacles she has overcome to get included in the State team for Perth. We are all so proud of you

Jenny. It was Joanne (who incidentally won a silver medal on Saturday for her sweeping prowess in one of the women's races) who set the ball rolling on this one. Funny really, as it was Jenny who asked me to get all the team to vote for Joanne! That's twins for you!

*Margot Case (Sydney)*

#### **Dele Gilmore – an Inspirational Award**

The Inaugural Steel Magnolia Award is a Hunter Valley Award. It has been given to a woman who has turned adversity into a resource to assist others. Mine recognition mainly stems from the work of providing accommodation for country families with seriously ill children (mainly cancer, accident victims, NICU) needing medical treatment in a paediatric hospital away from home. This work has been mainly done through RMH - Ronald McDonald House in the Hunter - which has, since its inception, provided some 78 000 bed nights. I became involved in establishing this house following the death of my beautiful 16 year old daughter Alicia from cancer.

Of course, DAA is now a passion with me and is another important facet of my life.

*Dele Gilmore (Hunter Region)*

#### **NT Ambassador of the Year Award Recipient**

**Alan Culbertson** – coach of Dragons Abreast NT and former State coach is the 2004 winner of the NT Ambassador of the Year Award. This is an award which is bestowed by the Minister for Sport and Recreation in recognition of an individual for their work in promoting the Northern Territory in the sporting arena. We are all very proud of Alan and thrilled with this win! *Dragons Abreast NT*



### Harmony Day – One Woman’s Perspective

Our Harmony Day Regatta in Darwin on Sunday 21 March this year. It was organised by DBNT and was a well-organised and successful, fun day.

We had been worried that it might have to be cancelled due to the rains as we had been having a few weeks of storms and torrential downpours from the effects of Cyclone Fay which blew across the Top End but, fortunately, didn’t come ashore. However, we were very fortunate as we awoke that Sunday morning to bright sunshine and a blue sky.

The Regatta was held in the Cullen Bay Marina and we gathered at the beach end and erected our small marquee and opened up our bright pink chairs. It was very comfortable out of the hot sun and we had a gentle breeze blowing from the sea.

At 10.am a Buddhist Monk opened the eyes of the dragons and blessed the boats and the paddlers, and the races began. The races continued, with a short break for lunch, until about 3 p.m.

We had a lot of our regular Dragons Abreast paddlers away that weekend, but with the help of our loyal supporters we were able to make up two teams of “Breast Friends” – one, our Premier Team, and the second one, our Novices team. Our teams seemed to do well in the heats, but just weren’t good enough in the finals. Our Premier Team was beaten by a dragon’s whisker by the Bayview Sun Dragons, and the Novice team was just beaten by the Department of Health Corporate team. This team was trains with us, in one of our boats, on Tuesday afternoons, so their win was like “keeping it in the family”.

Darwin is a multicultural city and this fact struck me again as I walked along the beach and watched the different crews thrashing the water with their paddles in an effort to get their boats across the finish line first. Harmony Day was a great day to have dragon boat races. So many of the participants and their families were from different cultural backgrounds and they were all paddling together and joining in the fun. It truly was a Harmonious Day.

A photo of our winning Corporate team is shown on the next page.

*Philippa Pike (NT)*

### Moomba Waterfest

Congratulations to everyone who took part in the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Melbourne International Dragon Boat Festival conducted by the VDBA. This year it was incorporated into the Moomba Waterfest long weekend. The event was fitted in around the infamous “Birdman Rally” and the Masters Waterskiing, so by mid to late morning the crowds were huge!

In an exciting challenge the Dragons Abreast Cup was won by the Bendigo team (2.40.12) just ahead by a whisker of the Melbourne team (2.40.49)! We welcomed several new paddlers this season and were very pleased that 5 of the dynamic & dedicated Geelong women were able to race. Every team raced twice and then we had our beautiful Flowers on the Water ceremony with a moving commentary from our spiritual leader, Pamela Williams.

Our boat, the “**Judy Costello**” looks stunning with the Dragons Abreast logo and BCNA Pink lady and we are all very proud to be paddling in her; it makes such a wonderful statement to see our message so out there in our teams of hot pink on the Yarra in front of so many people.

*Pru Menzies (Victoria)*

### Shell Harbour – Nicki’s First Race !

The day dawned cloudy. I know coz I was there to see it dawn. The clan gathered in the early light for the battle ahead. We realised at this stage in the strategy that we were missing one of our soldiers but we later collected them on the way to the battle field.

Half way to our destination the heavens opened up and stayed open even after closing time at the pub. But never mind.

When we finally arrived at the field of battle the tents, flags and standards were erected. The trumpets called and the challenge laid down.

The war ships clashed many times and apart from a single beaching of the mighty vessel (oops) due to some enthusiastic paddling, yelling and general mayhem, an outstanding day was had by all.

Two divisions of tiered soldiers made their way home pausing to sample the fruits of victory, some very excellent cake and hot chocolate, before finally arriving to the adulation of loved ones for a battle well fought.

All in all an epic adventure was had by all.

*Nicki Endt (ACT)*

*Ed’s Note: From all accounts a fine regatta and the Illawarra ladies deserve congratulations for their hospitality! See the following photo.*

#### **Names for our Newsletter**

*Suggestions so far include*

**PUFF – People United in the Fight against Fear.**

**Abreast of the Times**

**Rowbust**

**The Dragons Tales**

**Tit-Bits**

**HMV (Her Masters Voice)**

**The Grapevine**

**The News Desk**

**What’s your vote?? Email Pat or Anna**

**MERCHANDISE – The rashies have now arrived and are in stock again – contact Pauline for all your orders.**



**New Contact for Illawarra Dragons Abreast**

There have been a few changes on the Illawarra committee because of illness and other commitments. The new contact is

**Sylvia McMullen**

20 Talinga Ave Kiama Downs 2533  
Tel 02 4237 7083 Mob 0418 667 816  
email [sylviamcmullen@yahoo.com](mailto:sylviamcmullen@yahoo.com)

*"Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body; but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming, 'WOW, what a ride!'"*



Above: On the water in Shell Harbour (Picture courtesy Mavis Fowler)