

Dragons Abreast Sydney

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Chinese New Year 2007

WOW! That Pig has something to answer for! What a ripper Chinese New Year we just kicked off – somehow it gets more exciting each year. This year's regatta hosted over 200 crews and over 2,000 participants. Back in February 06 Kathryn Pineiro, unknowingly about to become our amazing Social Events Coordinator, was still unsure about dragon boating when she dropped by Darling Harbour, along with her buddy Liz Trenam, to check out what we were on about. This year she was absolutely in the thick of things:

It is amazing how it is a whole year since I went to watch the Dragon Boat races at Darling Harbour for the first time. In a further two weeks I was going to start paddling at the first Newbies day of the year, so it was great excitement to be there and looking at all the ladies in their pink tops, wondering who were the Sydney team. I remember saying to Liz, my wonderful supporter who started pad-



DASzlers Women building it up



A happy DASzlers Mixed crew ready to go – looks like the strokes were already in lock-down



Muriel Buckeridge sorting out paddle IDs



The Flowers on the Water ceremony as the petals started drifting away

dling with me as well, “I hope we will be good enough to paddle at the next Darling Harbour races!”

Then there was the Flowers on the Water Ceremony.

What an incredible experience to feel the emotion of all those around the waterfront, as we were hearing the statistics of breast cancer, and remembering those who were overtaken by the disease.

One year later, and I am able to paddle in the races. But what is more memorable for me is to take part in the Flowers on the Water Ceremony in the boat. Those moments out on the water as we placed the petals over the side were so serene, with the rain gently trickling down our faces, there was still so much emotion that swelled up inside, knowing the hard facts about breast cancer and that women still die. We could then hear beautiful voices singing out across the water - we didn't know at the time the singers were four very talented women from our team. How special.

We had all just paddled long and strong, and come first in the Dragons Abreast Challenge. It was my first time in a winning boat. What a buzz! We had all just paddled for our lives and then we put petals in the water to remember those special women gone before us. I realised then how we are paddling every time for our lives and we are all winners. Just being a part of such a wonderful team as DASydney is a great privilege, as well as being a part of increasing the awareness of breast cancer for all those at Darling Harbour on Sunday.

Kathryn Pineiro

Rain-soaked Carol Fentoullis, Michelle Hanton, Jane Mclean, Amanda Muir and Jenny Petroni



The Flowers on the Water Ceremony is always special, but this year, as well as the misty weather making it more evocative, it held a lovely surprise for us all. Did you all realize, as you sprinkled those lovely rose petals, that the hauntingly beautiful singing drifting across the water came from our own Carol Fentoullis, Jenny Petroni and Jane McLean, accompanied on the flute by Amanda Muir?

It all adds up. You know how Carol's sometimes away singing in her church choir? Plus some of us remember Amanda's flute-playing from Christine Barker's memorial, and then Jenny and

Jane are both singers too, soooo.... But we wanted to keep it a surprise for you all, so they practiced in secret. On the day it was magical and immensely moving – how beautifully they performed and what a very special treat for us all!

Isn't it amazing – there is so much we keep finding out about each other and it is lovely to have revealed and showcased the hitherto hidden talents of these four gifted girls. Huge thanks to Carol, Jane, Jenny and Amanda!

We are especially grateful to Roses Only for donating the lovely rose petals which amplify the beauty of this special ceremony



the post-race huddle with Carol: "What can I say?"

With her other hat on, as DASydney Head Coach, Carol had this to say about the racing on the weekend:

The CNY 2007 race results, for DASzlers crews, could not have been more impressive, remarkable or DAZ-ZLING!!!!

All the hard work, concentration and sweat during our twice weekly (triple for some) training sessions paid off with huge improvements in times for both the Masters Mixed and Masters Womens teams. The great feat of both teams making the finals will be a memorable moment for me as coach. What more can we hope for? Well I'll tell you there is more to grin about:

Our Mixed team may have come in 5th place but their time of 1.09.20 was a mere 4 seconds from a 3rd place. Let's look to the future and work on evening things out with a few more wonderful, willing and talented MEN. I know we will make further steps closer to that 1st place!!! I believe we are not that far from achieving this dream. So stick with it Neil, Sergio, Michael, Martin H., Martin H2 and Chris K. thank you for your patience and determination. Well done to the oh so strong women who make up this mixed team. Congratulations to all for this impressive result.

Our Masters Womens team was amazing, as not only did they win their heat with the time of 1.08.81, which was one second away from the 2nd boat, but also in the final they raced ahead winning with an improved time of 1.08.29 and this was two seconds away from the next boat!!! Every single paddler worked themselves 100% physically and mentally to ensure we were the CHAMPIONS! We know how good it feels and we don't want to change a thing!!



DASzlers Women – winners are grinners!



DASzlers Mixed looking good on the way to the start

We must also acknowledge our reliable drummer...Helen W. Thank You for firing us up, we need and appreciate this. A grateful "pat on the back" to our sweeps (Fairlie, Robin) for helping us over the course, a job well done!

The DA Challenge race results on the following day were just as exciting. Both DASydney Power and Passion crews raced with absolute strength and focus to achieve first place in each of their (Major and Minor) Finals!! My heart was smiling. I must say the final positions of our boats will be hard to improve on. If we continue to achieve these sorts of places/times with our two entries of one strong and one boat of newer paddlers (we have to realise Power had at least 5 first time CNY race paddlers) we will continue doing well.

As coach I am extremely proud of Passion's times, of 1.15.99 in the first heat, to the winning time of 1.13.00. And what can I say with Power's huge effort of 1.25.14 in their first heat to a time of 1.20.56. An amazing 5 seconds off shows

how working as a team does wonders!! Thank you to our special drummers: Sally Lynch and Jenny Petterson. And the sweeps (Fairlie, Claire) for your nerves of steel during the torrid weather conditions on this day.

Thank you to Jane McLean, Jennifer Petroni and Amanda Muir my singing buddies for the rendition of "Remember Me" for Flowers on the Water. It was a special moment for me.

Lastly, I have to give my thanks to Fairlie, our Team Captain, for her tireless work in getting the huge amounts of work done in preparing our teams/paddlers for this wonderful two-day event. To our Passion and Power crews and to our composite boat paddlers, EACH of you, individually and to you as a team:

WELL DONE,
CONGRATULATIONS!
Keep up your LOVE OF LIFE!
Your PASSION and POWER!
With admiration,

Coach Carol

Another new paddler, Chris Dunn, wrote of her impressions of her first Chinese New Year at Darling Harbour:

The weekend of the 24th and 25th February 2007 will forever be etched in my memory as my first CNY – a totally awesome and wonderful experience.

Saturday dawned hot and sunny, and so off to Darling Harbour at the crack of dawn to help out where possible and cheer on our teams (not paddling today!)

Having no pre-conceived idea of what to expect, other than being told it was going to be “awesome”, nothing could prepare me for the excitement, the thousands (literally!) of paddlers, the huge crowds, and the wonderful array of pink shirts assembled.

I was soon filled with a growing sense of pride that I was actually a part of all this. It was wonderful to see our DASydney girls paddling so well against awesome opposition and melting temperatures – great results thanks to our wonderful coach and determined paddlers.

Saturday night was a hoot! A banquet in Chinatown – great food, great laughs, wonderfully organised! The hit of the night of course were the “Hot Flushes”. DASydney’s intrepid male paddler supporters – these men are WONDERFUL. What a group! The female battle cry “I am Woman” will never sound the same, Helen Reddy – eat your heart out! It was great to see so many of our interstate visitors having such a good time – especially loved the “get-ups” – pink wigs and tutus and all!!!

Sunday dawned wet, windy and could have been miserable except for the anticipation of the day to come.

We had early race starts – both Power and Passion, but after very choppy starts, and wet conditions, both teams took out the finals, which was fantastic. That final race for me was awesome (that word AGAIN!) – I will never forget that final hooter and the cheering of the crowds as we passed the finishing line.

On a personal note I was especially happy to have my family and neighbours turn up on such a wet day to cheer me on and witness what we are all about. It was lovely to see so many family and friends join our group. (My special favourites are Jo’s two littlies with their “My Mum’s a Dragon Lady” shirts – it brought a lump to my throat to see them cheering on their Mum.

It was great to be able to “spread the word” to so many people who stopped and wanted to know more of the dragon-boating, and being so proud to tell them at every opportunity that we are pink lady survivors.

Using that word “AWESOME” again, and on a personal note, my daughter has a survivor working for her who belongs to a NSW club,



Who’s a happy coach then?



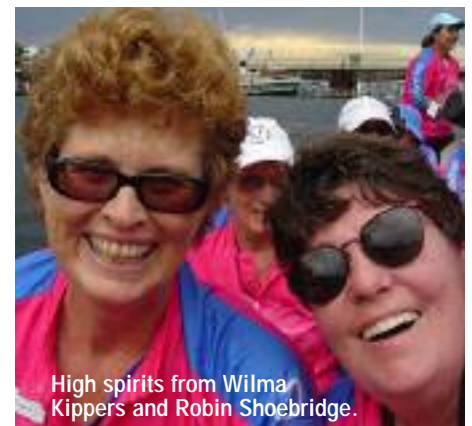
No race nerves for these DASzlers women: Team Captain Fairlie Stanish, Deb Hirst, Di Millgate, Vicki McLean, Gael Ellis and Robin Shoebridge.

and on being told what club her Mother belongs to – DASydney – the reply was: “They are AWESOME” and so we are!!!

One funny incident though on Sunday, I was approached by a couple of young men who asked me what was going on – was it a “market or something”. After explaining what the celebrations were and why there were so many pink shirted ladies around, one of them looked me up and down and said incredulously “you – paddle these boats?” Assuming they meant – “aren’t you a bit old” I said:- “I really am only 25 but I’ve had a hard life!!!” And with that they took off scratching their heads (hopefully got the message)

So often this past week I have wished we had the ability to re-run our experiences as they happened. There are some experiences you don’t want to fade, and the Flowers on the Water ceremony is one of those. It was a touching, beautiful ceremony, and one that I constantly re-live and we should be very proud of our girls who took a special part in that.

The Hospital Challenge was another fun experience. The doctors and nurses had an absolute ball and came off the water soaking wet, laughing and on an absolute high, as we gave them a “guard of honour” with our



High spirits from Wilma Kippers and Robin Shoebridge.

paddles as they disembarked.

The team I was helping with came a very proud second (the SAN RADPower), so that was an added bonus and I noticed one of the girls was proudly wearing her medal at the SAN when I visited last week.

So now a “Thank-you” – To all you people at DASydney (gals and guys) for giving me a whole new lease on life. To all of you who work so hard to make the club such an “AWESOME” one – that word again – I am so full of admiration for your commitment! For realising that I have a lot of life left to live!!!!

Chris Dunn

Bring it on, Little Buddy!

Brenda Owen, keen to hone her officiating skills for the DB World Championships here later this year, volunteered on the finish line for a day at CNY. This is how she saw it:

I continue to be amazed how many opportunities I have had since experiencing breast cancer – almost eight years ago now. Life is just full of ‘first times’ and for me, Saturday at CNY was my first time as a DBNSW Official. If I can wrap it up in one small article I would like to share the experience because it was truly amazing.

I arrived, full of anticipation, just before the designated 6:30am start time to find Cockle Bay already alive with dragon boaters, like a small army of ants working away quietly – unpacking, warming up, drinking large mugs of hot liquid from Starbucks, installing flags carrying around equipment and preparing boats. I made my way over to the Officials area where video equipment, sound systems and computers were being hooked up and tested.

I was scheduled as ‘Finish Line’ results person. Never having done this before I was anxious to discover exactly what that entailed. Mercifully, I was adopted immediately by Margaret (Mum) Cantwell and put to work hanging up the results sheets outside the tent – that was easy, what’s next? Assemble the 2-way radios ready for distribution – no sweat! Other officials are arriving – get them to sign in, collect their shirts, stop-watches, 2-ways (if necessary) & microphones – for the announcers.

Mum gives me a clip-board with pages and pages of race details. I have to work with the race time-keepers, writing down all the times that they record, working out boat positions and distributing all the recorded details. Uh Huh, that sounds like I will be busy!

I get with the time-keepers and we work out our strategy and positions at the finish line. Mum then kits me up with a 2-way receiver clipped to my hip and a microphone clipped to the front of my shirt. I meet JB & Paul (henceforth known as ‘Start Line’) and we run through the pre-race communication procedure. Mel then appears and strings a neat little gadget around my neck which is designed to record the finish times and



Brenda talking into her shirt at CNY

print off a paper record for each race. Time to grab the hat, sunnies and sun-screen.

It’s approaching 8:30, it’s going to be a hot day, first race has been marshalled and is already loading, I am feeling like Rambo but looking more like a sweaty Metal Mickey with a Squawky Walkie-Talkie.

My shirt talks to me: “Start Line to Finish Line. 2 minutes to race start, over”

I talk back to my shirt: “Finish Line to Start Line. Copy, over”

I go into a rugby-scrum-like huddle with the time keepers and we sit there, tension mounting!

My shirt talks to me again: “Start Line to Finish Line. 1 minute to race start, over”

“Finish Line to Start Line. Copy, over”

Start Line goes to what’s called ‘Open Channel’ (a somewhat dickie state to be in as communication drops out after a certain time and has to be reset) while the Starter brings the boats into position. Then, from my shirt we all hear the familiar:

“All boats hold water” “Are you ready?” “Attention!” “Go/Click” – all seven race timing devices launch into action. All six time keepers, the Cockle Bay Hooter, the spotters and myself assume position to record the finish as the

boats zoom past the narrow aperture between the white post and the Plumb Line.

My position is right at the front so I crouch down as low as possible with the other time keepers graduating in height behind me. Left hand poised on the stop button, right hand gripping the pencil ready to record my version of the sequence of boats over the line. Melanie and Charlotte supervising from above, Sean in the tower calling it as it passes by the commentary box. Here they come....

There is much excitement and a flurry of activity as the boats fly past between us and the pink marker on the other side of Cockle Bay. The Hooter person must definitely point that hooter away from any living thing! Finish Line assumes its familiar huddle position and I collect all the times. We work out race positions and confirm this with the spotter (Charlotte has cloned herself and is doing this job as well as being race secretary at the moment).

Paper work done and copied and before we know it, my shirt is talking again: “Start Line to Finish Line. minutes to race start, over”

I talk back to my shirt: “Finish Line to Start Line. We’re ready, over”

The time-keepers reset their stop watches for the start of the next race.

The day zooms by. The races are fast and furious.

We huddle, crouch, click, record, & listen to my shirt – over and over.

I get all excited when I see DASzlers out there doing it! Mel gets all excited when the NSW Combined Juniors are out there doing it!

There is a multitude of things to contend with:

- check the video footage for close finishes,
- batteries have just died in someone's 2-way,
- paper needs changing on my whiz-bang timer,
- teams haven't even arrived at the pontoon when the race start is about to be called,
- someone has strayed into someone else's lane causing havoc,
- Damn! the lead in my pencil has just broken!,
- where are the results from some race or other,
- the computer has just (I won't use Mel's words) stuffed up and lost all the recorded times, they have to be re-keyed
- Commentary box needs to speak with Sean who has decided to join Finish Line for the finals; Sean is then seen talking into my shirt (I really did need to explain that just in case someone took a photo)
- that storm is approaching – we just saw lightning, and
- there is always a disgruntled team who thought they did it better.

I have a renewed respect for Melanie and the DBNSW team who handled everything with such calm and patience. All Volunteers and Officials are very well looked after with food and drink. We were treated with the greatest respect and there was a wonderful sense of excitement and inclusiveness amongst everyone.

Fifty one races later, with rigor mortis setting into my thighs from crouching, we are into the swing of things and my shirt talks to me again: "Start to Finish. 2 minutes to race start."

I talk back to my shirt: "Finish to Start. 10:4 Little Buddy, bring it on!"

Brenda Owen



Frenetic lion dancers added to the overall CNY excitement

Muriel Buckeridge spent the Sunday at CNY as a race official, but in a different role to that described so vividly by Brenda. She recommends volunteering as an official, and had this to say about it:

As you may know, I spent Sunday as an official for DBNSW timing one of the lanes and then helping with the gear and the boats back at Bank Street. I can highly recommend the experience. I have a much greater appreciation now of the organisation and hard work that goes on behind the scenes, particularly at such a big regatta. I met some really lovely people from other clubs and had lots of great conversations as well as lots of laughs (and a few hairy moments that you as paddlers don't need to know about!). Seeing six dragon boats being towed behind a water taxi was a great sight too.

Muriel Buckeridge

There are any number of different official roles at a regatta (something to suit everyone). For example, Martin Aston did a splendid job all day on the pontoons with the boats coming and going and helping all the crews getting on and off. We are all hugely indebted to these volunteers because without them the regatta simply would not happen. So do think about volunteering sometimes (especially if you can't paddle due to injury or whatever) and, if you're paddling, then encourage your "significant others" to volunteer. Then they can share your fun and will have so much more empathy for the sport you love so well.

Careful Crewing

Crewing decisions are always difficult and the Team Captain faces dozens of difficult decisions, particularly in regattas, in working out what events we can enter, based on which paddlers (and how many of them) are available on a particular day and who can paddle where. Being generally the highest profile event on our racing calendar, CNY poses extra challenges because some paddlers have strong feelings about which team they want to be in. It is important to remember that whichever way the crewing is worked out, it is always a compromise because the Team Captain must ensure that everyone gets to paddle as many times as possible within the confines of the DAA and DBNSW race rules and the limits of the race draw on the day.

Special thanks are due to Team Captain, Fairlie Stanish, for handling this thankless task, for fielding the objections, and for ensuring that all the backup paperwork allowed it to happen so smoothly.

Seating in the boat is a separate issue which is sorted by the Team Captain in conjunction with the coaches. Decisions re seating are complex and it is very important that paddlers appreciate the inherent difficulties in this and remain flexible. A good paddler can perform well in any position in the boat, so paddling in different positions offers the opportunity to develop your paddling to a higher level.

Party Central

And was it ever a party! The DASydney CNY Banquet was a real screamer this year. Kathryn Pineiro, in cahoots with Liz Trenam, turned on an amazingly festive event. 180 pink partygoers arrived in all manner of dress (see pictures of the Twin Titties gals), leaving the other patrons of the Dragon Star Seafood Restaurant in Haymarket choking on their char sui in amazement (early apparitions from Mardi Gras, perhaps?). There were so many highlights of the evening that it's hard to know where to start.

Helen Westwood MC'd the event with considerable aplomb, moving the evening's programme along at a cracking pace. Whenever the noise levels rose too high prior to an announcement she'd startle everyone into silence with a sudden call of "Paddles up!" or "Stop the Boat!" and, being the obedient paddlers we all are, naturally we'd stop mid-sentence. Eight DA clubs were represented at the dinner, including Wendy Cevaal from Bravehearts, the Albury-Wodonga DA girls girls who famously built their own dragonboat!

Of the other clubs, who could miss the Twin Titties from Townsville, then there was a large contingent from the DAM Oarsomes (Mackay), plus the Pink Snapdragons (DA Radcliffe), the Titty Titty Bang Bang girls (Sunshine Coast DA), Beyond Survival (Gold Coast DA), Tickled Pink (Canberra) and a huge gang from Missabittatitti (Brisbane DA), including their guest paddlers from Amazon Heart, Meredith Campbell and Megan Dwyer, the whirlwinds wunderkinds behind Amazon Heart Adventures, Expeditions and rides for breast cancer survivors. Meredith spoke tantalizingly about some of the group's adventures and about the strongly developing links between Amazon Heart and DAA.

All the clubs contributed to the evening's entertainment but the absolute darlings of the night were the Hot Flushes (well, we would be biased, wouldn't we?!). These much-loved DASydney menfolk put on a star turn with their wickedly reworded and enthusiastic, if somewhat off-key, cover version of a slightly more famous performer's signature tune. The really cool thing is that, down the line, when the Hot Flushes' CDs have gone gold and the pop world claims ownership of our gorgeous guys, we can brag to their other fan club members and groups that we knew them before they became famous!!

There were plenty of laughs throughout the



Carol Douglas leading the Townsville Twin Titties' war cry.



Pam Bell choosing between going upstairs and making love.



Some of the Pink Snapdragons

evening but the laughs almost got out of hand when Pam Bell, with her ingeniously innocent expression, took the mike to regale us with hilarious tales of her exploits as our oldest DASydney paddler. You've never seen so much running mascara from all the laughing.

Special thanks to Kathryn and Liz for turning on such a memorable night. Thanks too to everyone who contributed, especially to Helen for her emceeing, to Jo for her fun trivia quiz, and to Gael for the success of the raffle.

Thanks must also go to Bodywise at Balmain, who provided five great packages of their new pink range, worth over \$700, as lucky door prizes. Visit their website at www.bodywise.com.au to see the full range.



The Hot Flushes on their first gig – Michael O'Donnell, Martin Hastings, Chris Kwong, Sergio Pineiro, Martin Hirst and Neil Millgate



Our brilliant party organizers Kathryn Pineiro and Liz Trenam with Di Williams.



Kathryn Pineiro briefing the bouncers at the door – Fairlie Stanish, Robin Shoebridge and Margot Case.



DASydney members enjoying the CNY banquet

Hospital Team Managers at the practice session, waiting for the invasion.



Jenny Petterson stretching down with Prof Barry Allen from St George Hospital.

The Hospital Challenge

Right up until December it looked like we wouldn't be allowed to run this race again at CNY and then, when the word came through, it was an incredible scramble at the last minute to get it all together. Turns out, in the intervening time since the previous Hospital Challenge, word about the dragon boat race had spread (never underestimate the extent of inter-hospital rivalry). There was a distinct feeling in the crews who'd been there last year that the Mater Radiation team needed to be stripped of its crown.

Not all the previous year's hospitals managed to get crews together in time, but new crews from St Vincents, St George and Liverpool eagerly snapped up the vacated places. The final line-up saw Mater Radiation, Sydney Adventist Hosp (SAN) RADPower, RNSH Radiation, Westmead RADONC, SAN 2, Prince of Wales, College of Nursing, BreastScreen/Liverpool, NSW BCI (Breast Cancer Institute), NCI (Northern Cancer Institute), St Vincents and St George.

The practice morning the week prior to CNY was a significant logistic exercise in itself, there being so many other crews there (who were quite unrelated to the Hospital Challenge) trying to pack in last minute training sessions before the big day.

Fortunately we were blessed with fine weather and happy, enthusiastic participants so it was a fun morning. Our girls thoroughly enjoyed introducing the hospital crews to the joys of dragon boating and, if the smiling faces and laughter were anything to go by, so did the participants.

While the main challenge for the hospital crews was the paddling, an equal if not greater challenge lay in the organization of the both the practice day and the race day itself. Huge thanks to Sue McClelland, who did a sterling

job coordinating the DAsydney hospital team managers, sweeps and drummers on both occasions.

On the big day, the timing between the DA Challenge and the Hospital heats was very tight and it wasn't helped by the drizzly weather which left everybody wet and bedraggled. Another problem arose because so many of our girls were busy looking after the individual hospital crews that we had hardly anybody free to make up the Paddle Guard of Honour. Fortunately the girls from Penrith DA helped out with the PGOH, which is an important way for us to express our appreciation of not only their support of DAA but also of all they've done for us all during our treatment.

Two heats and a final made for extra excitement in this year's DA Hospital Challenge. Talk about the will to win – with these Hospital Challenge finalists it was almost tangible!

Turns out Mater Radiation pulled it off again – they put in a fantastic performance and what they may have lacked in style was more than made up for with sheer enthusiasm and brute strength, crossing the line in a highly respectable time (especially considering they'd only had the one morning's practice, where some of the sporting teams in other categories that day had put in weeks of training to achieve a similar time).

The good news is that post-race feedback has revealed a general consensus that it was all lots of fun – which is what we wanted it to be. Even better is the knowledge that all those medical professionals now not only know what a dragon boat is, they have actually paddled in one and seen their patients doing it too. Hopefully that will firmly imprint Dragons Abreast in their minds and they will remember to tell their breast cancer patients about all the fun that awaits them at the end of their treatment.



Diana Ng from Mater Radiation, holding up the trophy for her jubilant teammates.



Jenny and Joanne Petterson with Jenny's St George oncologist, Dr Jodi Lynch.



Excited SAN RAD Power paddlers with their medals.

Junior High

That Carol – she’s a girl of many talents. Probably what excited her most on the water that weekend was “her” Juniors. As joint Coach of the NSW State Junior Squad, Carol took particular pride in her charges not only getting to the final but coming third to the vastly more experienced Canberra Grammar crews. (Carol’s charges had only started paddling the one month before – so what a sterling effort!)

We all had a special interest in the juniors too, because Claire Hendy’s daughter, Georgina was paddling with them, plus Tracey Bowne’s niece Emma, Pam Bell’s grandsons Daniel and Josh, Sue Tolhurst’s son Alex, Kathryn and Sergio Pineiro’s nephew Daniel, Jodi Lynch’s daughter (Jodi is our Jenny Petterson’s oncologist) and I’d persuaded a couple from my gym to have their daughter join as well. Some of them these juniors have joined us recently for extra paddle practice so we were all keen for them to do well.

It was quite a momentous race for Mel and DBNSW too – since it was the first time that NSW has fielded a Junior team. Carol’s next (enormous) goal is to get them across the line first at the Nationals – but we reckon if she can get a bunch of old chooks like us across the line first, she can do it with her hands behind her back with these keen kids.

Composite Crewing

Paddling in composite crews is another unexpected delight at CNY. Composite crews are a wonderful invention that enable DASydney paddlers to always find a spot in a boat at Chinese New Year. Dragon boats are pretty inflexible when it comes to how many paddlers they can accommodate and it’s rare that we have exactly a crewful of paddlers at a regatta. This is where composite boats come in – if we are short of paddlers we can borrow paddlers from other DA clubs to make up a full crew. Similarly, if other clubs are short we can lend them some of our paddlers. It’s a wonderful way to meet other survivors in a fun situation and to enable everyone to paddelfind a place in a boat.

You can tell Kathy Dundas had a ball with in Missabittatitti crew when you read what she had to say about her CNY composite experience:

Being a new paddler (joining DASydney only a few months ago) and attending CNY as my first regatta, I was a little nervous about what to expect. I had heard the more experienced paddlers describing a very exciting and



Carol and some of her Juniors

colourful day full of racing and promoting awareness of breast cancer. I had been chosen to paddle in a composite team (Missabittatitti from Brisbane) and I guess that made me a little more nervous. I realised I shouldn’t have worried after I caught up with a few of the team at the Banquet the night before – they seemed nice enough...

On the day I got to know them much better. What a great bunch of girls!! They made me feel so welcome and I had a fantastic time. After learning their war cry, team song and

strategy I felt like one of the team. The FOW ceremony was more emotional than I expected, perhaps as I was sharing it with a group of women who I had known for such a short time but who understood and had travelled a similar path.

I’m pleased to say that I have been invited to paddle with the MBT girls any time I find myself north of the border and I’m looking forward to catching up with them at Caloundra.

Kathy Dundas



See the blue stripe of Kathy Dundas’ DASydney shirt here in row 9 of the Missabittatitti composite crew?

Geris CNY photo album online

Because of the rush getting this newsletter together while CNY is still fresh in everyone’s mind, I haven’t been able to get hold of some of the great pictures that are still out there. But fortunately you can see many more if you follow this link kindly put up on the web by Geri Hill: picasaweb.google.com.au/hill.geraldine/QMChineseNewYear02



DASydney party animals at the NSW Sports Awards Dinner

Whoever heard of Dragon Boating?

Who would've thought it? The three finalists in the NSW State Sports Team of the Year were the Sydney Swans, the Sydney Swifts and who???? Surely not the DBNSW 2006 State Squad? In all honesty it's probable that what propelled dragon boating to this unexpected prominence was not so much our members of the men's and women's Masters Crew (read us) as it was the crews who went to Macau and performed so brilliantly at the Asian DB Championships. But hey! Who were we to look a gift nomination in the eye – after all we *were* in the squad and we *did* do well. So some of us thought “what the heck” and off we went to the

awards dinner at Homebush along with a whole lot of puzzled sportsmen and women from the traditional sports.

Not surprisingly, we didn't win but we did have a fun evening, all frocked up and ready to party. There was a huge contingent from the db community there enjoying this first-ever recognition of dragon boating and we all chuckled as the big screen played mile after mile of TV footage of all the other sports.

Naturally enough there was nary a glimpse of dragon boating in that display (it's never been televised, has it?), but the other attendees could hardly ignore the fact that dragon boating had barged into their hallowed territory – and that was probably what we enjoyed most of all!



In the Same Boat – SMH 22-2-07

Media Tarts Again

Thanks to Michelle Hanton's connections we managed to get some wonderful exposure for Dragons Abreast the week prior to Chinese New Year in the 22nd Feb “Essentials” liftout of the Sydney Morning Herald. The main focus of the full page article was supposed to be Jenny Petterson, but the reporter chose to ring her the day after Jenny's latest surgery and the poor girl was in intensive care and so full of pethidine she couldn't remember much. Still, the article gave a great rap to Dragons Abreast – which is great because it's not fair for us to deny others all the fun simply because they haven't heard of us.

Margot Case, safely settled now in her lovely new home in Tea Gardens, has been hankering for more paddling and so has been trying to get a dragon boat team going up there on the beautiful Myall Lakes. She put this note (about an information meeting) in the local paper up there to gauge interest in getting a team together. Good luck Margot – having been up to EcoPoint Myall Shores Resort ourselves, you can be sure there are plenty of Sydney paddlers who will be keen to join you up there for a paddle from time to time.



Margot's article in the Tea Gardens local paper

More about Caloundra

Already 1500 have registered for Abreast in Australia in Caloundra later this year (not sure how many from DASydney so far – but believe it's lots). This is going to be the event of a lifetime. Yes, there will be some great dragon boating but there will also be a host of other activities available for all participants.

The Opening Ceremony will be held on the Friday night at Kings Beach Park in Caloundra. The evening will also include a variety of food stalls where you can select what you fancy for dinner (all included in the cost of your registration package).

As part of the celebrations a Street Parade will be held through Caloundra. All teams are invited to participate with mascots and banners. It's a chance to dress up in your Pinkest Finery and really fly the flag for breast cancer, your team, your State and your country!

The Party Night will be a hoot – and perfect for the whole family as it's being held in Aussie World – where everything, including admission and all the rides, will be free, plus the bus to get you there and back (if you're staying in one of the designated hotels). In fact you won't need a car up there at all if you're staying in one of the designated hotels, as transport from Caloundra to the regatta site and back every day is also included in your registration.

Workshops are being organised to cater for both supporters and survivors. Sessions will be varied and will include fun stuff like belly dancing, Reiki, aromatherapy sessions, learning about Aussie culture and more. There will also be add-on workshops dealing with specific subjects like lymphoedema.

The Dragon Walk of History will be the central piece of the Expo. This will be a fascinating trip through the years that DAA has been established and will highlight our member groups and landmark events. There will be a number of exhibitors covering a wide range of interests. Activities include hands on experiences as well as a variety of market stalls and 'fun' items to participate in – including activities for the kids.

A refreshment garden will be available where a variety of food stalls (use your lunch vouchers here) will cater to your needs, including vegetarian options.

The Closing Ceremony is still a secret, so I can't tell you anything about that.



Myall Mayhem

Instead on an End-of-Season party this year DASydney is going away on a relaxing weekend to the EcoPoint resort at Myall Lakes. If you haven't booked already, there's still time. So far we've taken fourteen 2BR villas up there – so you're guaranteed some great company. This is gonna be huuuuuge fun!

So many great people are coming with us to our End-of-Season retreat at EcoPoint resort at Myall Lakes that we're guaranteed to have a ball! These are the folk who are have booked so far: Margot Case, Robin Shoebridge, Lyn Tyson, Deb, Martin and Julia Hirst, Vicki and Peter Farmer, Rosie and Michael O'Donnell, Geri Hill, Brenda and David Owen, Angie and Martin Aston, Pam and Chris Bell, their daughter and grandchildren, Wilma Kippers and Martin Hastings, Kay Gailey, Judy Dykes, Kath O'Connell, Carolyn New, Claire and Ian Hendy and family, Eugenia and Colin Raftos, Carol and Mike Fentoullis, Wendy and Jan Jensen, Kathy Dundas and her family, Jo and Jenny

Petterson and Geoff and David, Sue Tolhurst, Chris Kwong and Alex, Stephanie Barrett and her family and me.

It's very comfortable accommodation (air con, ensuite, kitchenette etc) and awfully reasonably priced. There's heaps to do there – bushwalking, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, relaxing, and even the slim possibility of dragon boating – but not sure of that yet. We will also be running a paddling technique clinic and a demo of the resources available on the group email site (bet you will be amazed at what's there). There's a surf beach just 10 mins away by car and the villas are so comfortable you might just want to relax and do nothing.

Accommodation in the Garden Villas is 2BR, 2 bath, and only costs \$64.50 per person for the weekend (two nights special rate – how economical is that!). You can eat at the restaurant there or self-cater in your own kitchenette plus you can hire a BBQ for just \$20 and the use of canoes and kayaks will be thrown in free. It's school hols so you can bring the kids too if you want. If you are coming alone you'll want to buddy up to share villas for this friendly, relaxed weekend with people who speak your language eg. Paddles Up! (or should I say Dig it In?)

It's still not too late to join us, so please let Robin Shoebridge (rsho3799@bigpond.net.au) know if you are up for it and we can expand the bookings.

Rope in Your Newsagent

Wonderful news from the news people themselves! The Australian Newsagents Federation (ANF) and Bill Express have chosen Dragons Abreast as their charity of choice. ANF is the main Newsagency representative body in Australia and on behalf of its members Australia-wide they are supporting Dragons

Abreast Australia. ANF members are clearly identified by the ANF "N" logo.

Bill Express is an off-line bill payments network that enables consumers to pay their bills in newsagencies across Australia.

Look out for the ads on your newsagent's screen – they go to air on the 5th March and are playing at over 1600 newsagents across Australia!

When you go to your local ANF newsagent and see the DAA advertisement we'd like you to introduce yourself as a DAA member and thank them for their support of Dragons Abreast. Then ask them if you may put a DAA collection tin on their counter for just one month – as part of the Pink Pennies Appeal in support of AIA in Caloundra. I'll have a supply of the collection tins in my car at paddling, so please ask me for one, because every penny will help – the worst that can happen is that they might say "no"

Milestones

There must be something about March because there aren't many birthdays this month – but the ones there are are good ones: Diana Plater on the 4th; Carolyn New, on the 10th; then, finishing off the month with a flourish, on 24th we have Sue Williamson and the twins, Jenny and Jo Petterson. Happy Birthday all!

Diary Dates to Action

There's still time to register for Myall Lakes on April 20-22nd and please don't forget to register for Abreast in Australia, Caloundra 27th-30th Sept. if you haven't already – might be a good idea to book your flights to Maroochydore as well.

Paddles Up!
Cynth

DAS CALENDAR 2007

Date(s)	Event	Location	Details
March 2007			
Thu 1st	Women's Health Summit	Sydney Town Hall	Cynthia and Sue manning DASydney info booth
Sat 10th	DASydney Newbies Day	Banks St, Pyrmont	Prior registration required - phone Cynthia on 9449 6855
Fri 16th	DASydney Craft Group -scrapbooking, card-making etc	Pymble	Register with Robin Shoebridge on rsho3799@bigpond.net.au – everyone welcome.
Sun 18th	Harbour Bridge Walk	Harbour Bridge, natch	Fully booked
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 for us all.
Fri 13th	DASydney Craft Group – scrapbooking, card-making etc	Pymble	Register with Robin Shoebridge on rsho3799@bigpond.net.au – everyone welcome.
Fri 20th – Sat 22nd	DASydney End-of-Season Weekend Retreat	EcoPoint, Myall Lakes	Time to put our collective feet up and just relax.
May 2007			
Mon 14th	DASydney Craft Group - scrapbooking, card-making etc	Pymble	Register with Robin Shoebridge on rsho3799@bigpond.net.au – everyone welcome.
June 2007			
Sun 24th	DASydney family bike ride	TBA	Bring the family and a picnic, you can hire bikes there.
July 2007			
TBC Fri 20th	DASydney Changers and Supper Fashion Parade	Date and Venue to be confirmed	Enjoy the parade then try on and buy the clothes at wholesale prices!!
September 2007			
19th – 23rd	IDBF: World Dragon Boat Championships	Penrith SIRC	You can share in the excitement by volunteering – contact Margo-Lynne Lee on craftyturtle22@yahoo.com.au
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!