

FABER EST

THE FORTIANS UNION

BULLETIN

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NUMBER 65

JULY 2003

Produced for the Ex-Students of:

- ❖ Fort Street Girls' High School
- ❖ Fort Street Boys' High School
- ❖ Fort Street High School

COMING EVENTS

Fortians Union Annual Dinner

Date: **Friday October 17**

Cost : \$55 per person

Time: Dinner commences at 7pm

Venue: Menzies Hotel

Guest speaker: **HELMUT BAKAITIS.**

A brief but significant character in the new *Matrix Reloaded* film is that of The Architect, played by leading Australian actor and Fortian (1961) Helmut Bakaitis, who has accepted an invitation to be guest speaker at the annual dinner on October 17.

Many Fortians will remember Helmut in drama productions. A highlight was his Hamlet in the impressive schools performance on the steps of the War Memorial in Hyde Park in 1961, playing opposite Alanna McLean and other students from the girls' and boys' schools, a performance repeated at the now long gone Elizabethan Theatre at Newtown.

Helmut went on to play a wide variety of roles, from Shakespeare to contemporary plays. In the 1970s he ran The Saturday Company youth theatre group and later the Q Theatre at Penrith. Among his film and television roles have been as Sidney in *I Can't Get Started* (1985), as Harold in *Shirley Thompson Versus The Aliens* ('72) and Clyde in *Stork* ('71) and more recently as Dr Mayfield on TV's *Police Rescue*. He is now Head of Directing at NIDA.

Don't miss out on this great chance to hear a fascinating speaker. Time to organise your year group and book your table(s).

BOOKINGS CLOSE FRIDAY OCTOBER 3.

SCHOOL FOUNDATION FUNCTION

The Foundation will hold a Gala Dinner at the school on Saturday September 13. The cost is \$150 pp. Interested Fortians can contact the Foundation by calling Lisa Cahill on 0409 228 397 or by email lisa.cahill@bigpond.com.



REUNIONS AND OTHER THINGS

Class of 1964 - 40th Year Reunion in 2004

Planning is under way for a reunion to be held in Sydney, next year, in September **2004** for the not so old boys of 1964. If you are interested (in either attending and/or assisting with planning) please contact the following Fortians:

- ❖ **Russ Taylor** at russell.taylor@aiatsis.gov.au
6246 1118 (Canberra)
- ❖ **Joe Harper** at jharper@virtualtraining.com.au
9873 6363 (Sydney)
- ❖ **Bruce McCabe** at 0438 070 148 (Brisbane)
BruceMcCabe@bigpond.com

Ruth Hayes (nee Hastie) wants to know if there is any info about a reunion for 6th form - **1973**? If you can help please email Ruth c/- Hayesr@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au

Margaret Wigney sent the following item of interest to the class of **1953** who are celebrating 50 years since the Leaving Certificate. Professor **Janice Monk**, nee **Jones**, of the 1953 LC class was honoured at the annual general meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, held recently with the Taylor and Francis Award for excellence in the promotion and practice of teaching and learning in Geography in Higher Education. For 40 years, Jan has had a distinguished academic career in USA, first at the University of Illinois and then at the University of Arizona. Janice hopes to join her classmates at a lunch to be held at the National Trust Cafe on September 22.

Can anyone help Tracey who was at Fort Street between 1977 and 1981 and is trying to track down copies of the year books or Fortians? "I would love to know if anything is still available from that time. I haven't kept in contact with anyone from my school days so don't really know where to look. Any help or advice you may have would be appreciated. Kind regards, **Tracy Smedley (nee Whitby)**".

Girls of 1949 Annual Reunion at the National Trust Tea Room on Saturday September 6 meet at 11am for lunch. Contact **Sunny Bidner** on 9918 3888.

Clarice Morris BA Dip Ed.

Many Fortians who were members of the Old Girls' Union, were sad to learn that Clarice Morris passed away peacefully in September 2002 at the age of 91.

Clarice Heyner attended Fort Street Girls' High School, completing her Leaving Certificate in 1928.

She often reminisced about her excellent pass which led her to do a BA at Sydney University with emphasis on Botany as well as English and History. In 1932 she completed her Diploma of Education year at Sydney Teachers' College. The Depression made employment difficult for all new teachers and the Department allowed women who married at the end of the course to be released from their bond. This is exactly what she did, marrying another teacher, Ken Morris.

It was not until 1955 that Clarice began her teaching career. Her first appointment was at Abbotsleigh College teaching Science. In time she joined the State system and then TAFE. She was well known for her science and biology classes, working with hairdressing students for many years.

Clarice Morris was not only a keen botanist but also an artist. She studied design at East Sydney Technical College, and produced many paintings for her Colonial Plant Shop at Mt Victoria, her love of Australian wildflowers shining through in her work. She became interested in beauty therapy in the 1960s and completed a basic course so she could lecture to students on the chemistry of the skin. She was a regular contributor to the beauty therapists' magazine for many years, writing about natural ways to good health.

When many of her contemporaries retired she followed her own frequently pronounced advice: "never retire" and pursued a new career as a TAFE correspondence teacher in such science-based diverse fields as greenkeeping and soil management. She received letters of thanks from many country men and women as well as gaol inmates who were doing the courses. She continued marking their papers until her late eighties.



Photo: Morris Publishing

Clarice wrote seven books. Her first three, *Let's Find Out*, were a nature study series for primary school students. Then came *Physiology of the Skin and Hair* for TAFE students. The next three books were favourites for her: two on Australian wildflowers and her book as an honoured Patron of her beloved Fort Street, *The School on the Hill*.

Clarice Morris, kind hearted and proudly Australian, was always ready to show anyone and everyone the exercises she did each morning and to tell them what to eat to stay healthy. Her passion for life, art and nature were best summed up in the flower she adored: the waratah. There could not be a better expression of her own life: colourful, proud and resilient.

Lynn Champion



2003 CHURCH SERVICE

The 2003 Fortians Church Service held recently at St Philip's Church Hill, was a great success with a large number of Fortians attending (see photograph below). Archbishop Robinson was the guest preacher and fondly recalled his time as a visiting Scripture teacher at FSGHS and the girls' involvement with the church during his time as Rector of St Philip's.



Who was Thelma Talbot?

Recently read a very brief notice about Thelma May Talbot who passed away on April 8. The notice went on to say: "From the coalmines of Lithgow to the jungles of New Guinea, from the cosmopolitan Hague to the classrooms of Fort Street, always an intellect, always a teacher. Fondly remembered. Still inspiring." Does anyone know any more about this fascinating lady with a Fortian connection?



School News

The School has received the **Director-General's Award for Excellence** to celebrate 20 years of the Instrumental Music Program. If you have the opportunity to hear any of the Fort Street music groups (and there are many of them) please do, as the groups are considered among the best school ensembles!



Recently Fort Street received some curious publicity with headlines like "*School's one grand demand on families*" and "*Begging for more*". The school had sent a letter to all families at the school requesting assistance to fund work which included maintenance and the refurbishing of rooms that will be used for other purposes once the new buildings are completed. The School community has met with Dr Refshauge and it seems the situation is not quite as dire as predicted; however funds are still required for a range of building projects to support the fantastic work of staff and students at Fort Street.



More Fortian News

The **boys of 1953** are planning a reunion at the School on September 16. The contact is **Michael Bow** at gliding@ozemail.com.au



The **class of 1983** is planning a 20-year reunion for more information. Contact **C King** at charm@hotmail.com



Jim Deves' class of **1963** is also planning a reunion this year. Are you interested? Jim can be contacted at mdjrd@mail.newcastle.edu.au



In response to a recent article on Jim Deves we have received the following item from **Graham Ley**.

"It was interesting to read about some of Dr James Deves' travels/moves since he left FSBH in 1963. Thanks Jim.

"Since I maintained contact with precious few, I just occasionally wonder about the paths of my peers after our leaving year"

In 1965 I simply changed hills - from Fort St at Taverner's Hill to Newington at Stanmore. By day I managed the science labs and at night completed my B.Sc. (UNSW) 1973. My Dip Ed (UNE) was completed externally in 1978. In 1998 I completed my M.Sp.Sc. (UNSW). Since 1972, my wonderful wife (Janet) and I have devoted some time to raising our three sons: Benjamin (30) Cameron (27) and Toby (19). I am presently teaching junior science and senior chemistry while my extracurricular roles focus mainly on basketball. For quite a few years now I have been involved in various aspects of the game and have coached Newington's senior team." We are sure that Graham will be joining Jim at the planned reunion!

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AN AFTERNOON WITH DENIS CONDON & HIS REPRODUCING PIANOS

Denis Condon was an inspiring and innovative music teacher at Fort Street Boys High School for 12 years (1959-1970) whose school choirs and madrigal groups won a swag of competitions at eisteddfods. Over the past 50 years Denis has acquired a substantial piano roll collection and several non-foot impelled reproducing pianos.

A group of Fortians and friends recently visited Denis' comfortable home music room to listen to some of his friends - including Rachmaninov, Horowitz, Stravinsky and Paderewski - play Prelude in C sharp minor, a Turkish Rhapsody, *The Desert Song* and some less familiar pieces. These composers often cut the rolls such that "not only the touch and technique, but all the personality of the shading and interpretation of the artist [were] most faithfully recorded" (Artur Schnabel).

His old reproducing pianos are pneumatic powered - an electric motor drives a vacuum pump. They include two Welte Mignons dating from 1911 and 1925 (a Steinway) and an Ampico (AMERICAN PLANO COMPANY), all restored and adapted by Denis. His latest acquisition is a sleek, state-of-the-art Yamaha whose rolls are recorded electronically with excellent reproduction. Complementing the rolls is Denis' encyclopaedic musical knowledge laced with anecdotes. A sumptuous afternoon tea provided by the visitors rounded off a most melodic afternoon.

Richard Blair

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Observing history

To mark their 40th anniversary two years ago, Fortians of the **girls' class of 1961** approached the National Trust about setting up a permanent display in the main building at Observatory Hill, featuring highlights from its 129 years as a school. "The display panels would remind visitors to the historic building of the pivotal role the school played in the history of education in Australia," says **Sandra Funnell**.

The '61 girls have come up with an eclectic gathering of pieces, photos and other memorabilia, much of which has also been depicted in the Maroon and Silver book. Now the Trust's curators and designers are considering how to use the material. Sandra says the Trust has promised to have something ready, perhaps in mock-up form, for the group's annual lunch in September. For more details, call **Sandra Funnell** on 9818 2903.

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CRASH COURSE

The school on Taverners Hill has long been assailed from above by aircraft noise, but a recent attack from Parramatta Rd traffic managed to close the school for a day. A vehicle heading down the hill went out of control, crashed through the school's front fence and demolished a brick structure housing the school's water and gas supplies. Fortunately nobody was injured, but the cut to water and gas supplies meant the school had to be closed for the day and students sent home.

Principal Ros Moxham said afterwards she had to thank modern technology. "We could send home the Years 11 and 12 students, but for Years 7 to 10 we had to get permission from each student's parent. A quick solution: the students were called to assembly and, for once, they were told: 'OK, take out your mobile phones - and ring your parents.' And they all did."

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WAVES OF LAUGHTER

Among the most widely heard Fortian voices on Sydney airwaves is that of **Josh Szeps** ('95) who is presenting a political satire spot on Mike Carlton's afternoon radio program on 2UE. His knack for comedy and impersonations, nurtured no doubt by dad Henri Szeps, was honed at Fort Street, where he'd often send up the teachers. (Still fondly remembered is a Staff versus Students Great Debate in the hall that Josh took part in. On the Staff team was the then principal, Lee Carroll - not the tallest of men, who could only just be seen behind the lectern. While Lee was speaking, Josh quietly slipped into the wings and returned with a milk crate for him to stand on. The uproar from the audience almost raised the roof.)

Since leaving university, Josh has worked as a scriptwriter and producer on several radio and TV programs, has done voice-over work (including Ollie the Kookaburra for the Olympics) and has various other projects on the boil.

Another Fortian voice to be heard on radio is that of **Nick Lucchinelli** ('99) who has been a councillor on Strathfield Council and is now a news reporter on 2GB.

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MAROON & SILVER

The book published for the Sesquicentenary, costs \$39.95 (plus postage and handling of \$5.05). Contact George on 9568 - 2444. Using the rich archives of Fort Street High School, the photographs, drawings and sketches reproduced in this book vividly depict the school's 150 years. The history of Fort Street is unfolded in a series of vignettes covering the school's development over the years since 1849 and is designed as a coffee-table volume.

FABER EST



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FORTIANS UNION ANNUAL DINNER

BOOKING FORM.

Date: Friday October 17 2003

Venue: Menzies Hotel

Please complete this form and mail it with your payment to:

The Fortians Union
PO Box N1, PETERSHAM NORTH NSW 2049

Cost per person \$55, no. in this booking: __: \$ ____

I enclose my cheque or money order made payable to the Fortians Union for \$ ____ .

Surname: _____

Given name: _____

Name at School: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Mobile: _____

I wish to sit with the following year group: _____ (ie last year at school)

Others in this booking:

Please book no later than Friday 3 October

NO TICKETS WILL BE MAILED OUT

BOOKINGS WILL BE CHECKED AT THE DOOR.

Parking on the evening is available at Secure Parking - entry in Wynyard Lane off Margaret Street.

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