Mullumbimby High School Ex-Students
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MEMBER CONTACTS

The plan to add to our memberships is now under way.

By now everyone on our registers should have received a letter from the Membership Co-ordinator, Judy Hill (Mackney), explaining the plan to increase our membership.

To recap, Judy was calling for members willing to develop local mailing lists using their peer group and family contacts to encourage social connections in areas such as Sydney, the north and far north coast, Gold and Sunshine Coasts and Central Queensland.

Our registers tell us that there are clusters of ex-students in these areas, especially, and we would like to encourage exes to make connections, stay in touch and add their names to our member lists.

Our first volunteer is Lyle Robb who, although recently based in Yeppoon, is now spending more time in the Toowoomba area. Lyle’s experiences in the Queensland summer of nightmares (with his relocatable housing business) were shared in the last newsletter.

Many thanks, Lyle. We look forward to your contribution in due course. And of course we look forward to some other volunteers, as well.

HOW WE WORK

New members, and sometimes those who are interested but who have not taken the step towards membership, have been heard to say they “can’t do much” for the Association because they are “too far away from Mullumbimby” to attend meetings.

It may be hard to imagine, but it really doesn’t matter where you live. This miraculous technology that we are now so familiar with (and in some cases so dependent upon), allows us to function as a disembodied group, all be it with local contacts and connections, keeping the current alive throughout the nation and beyond.

Here’s how we have adapted to work as a committee.

For most of us, being on a committee means turning up to a meeting place (these days often a cafe), having papers in front of us, a pencil in hand, someone presiding at the opening and closing and working through an agenda. Decisions are made, actions confirmed, minutes taken and approved as a record of proceedings.

For this Association, this only happens for the AGM and the very occasional committee meeting.

At other times, at the direction of the president, we exchange emails, do the necessary work, come to some agreement, and then by way of a Circular Resolution to all committee members, formalise a vote and record it. These resolutions are confirmed when the committee gathers. In this way, we can make decisions and carry on throughout the year.

Last year, we developed this methodology to liaise and coordinate between the school, the president and our expert member to complete the upgrade of the auditorium sound system.

Although we were feeling our way, and some members find it strange to converse by email, we have developed a rhythm and it works.

So, if you are thinking about what you can do for the organisation, please don’t be deterred by the fact that you live a long way from your home town. It’s inherent in our makeup.

See pictures on www.facebook.com/search/
I left Mullumbimby High School in December 1958 and joined the RAAF as a Technical Apprentice on the 19th of January 1959. In Brisbane I joined other recruit apprentices heading for the RAAF School of Technical Training in Wagga Wagga.

The first few weeks were spent on the parade ground doing drill but then I was told I was going to become an Airframe Fitter. I had applied to go to RMIT to do a Mechanical Engineering Degree and I was accepted. It soon became apparent that my education wasn’t suitable for the task, so I left RMIT and had to catch up on the training I’d missed.

I spent three years at Wagga and graduated with a First Class Certificate of Education. (Many years later I was awarded an Associate Diploma in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering [Airframes]). I was posted to Amberley for “on the job training” for the final two years of my apprenticeship. I worked on Sabre “E” Servicings, a major overhaul of the aircraft. Next, I worked on Canberras.

My first flying assignment was to 6 Squadron and in December 1965 I was posted to 2 Squadron in Butterworth, Malaysia. My sweetheart, Noela, finished her final year of Nursing Training, joined me and we married in Penang. I bought her a transistor radio for Christmas, and the first sound that came from it was a news bulletin announcing that my squadron was being deployed to Vietnam.

The Squadron departed Butterworth for Phan Rang in South Viet Nam on the 19th of April 1967. We worked three shifts and the Yanks were impressed with us and 2 Sqn was awarded the United States Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. I was in Vietnam just short of 12 months.

Back at Amberley we bought a home in Ipswich. I was again posted to 3AD and I worked on Iroquois helicopters, Canberras and was involved in spares assessing for a Phantom that crashed landed on the base. The next posting was to Williamstown, near Newcastle, to work on Mirages. Six months later in 1976 it was to Malaysia, and we went with our two daughters, eight and six.

I elected to take a discharge at the end of my 20 years service in Amberley and we returned to our comfortable home in Ipswich where I began to manufacture an Ultra-Light aircraft, Cygnet, designed by Bill Whitney, a Brisbane Aeronautical Engineer. Working with friends from my apprenticeship days, we carried on making the Cygnet, selling plans and providing components, despite the tragic death of our pilot.

I had also invented an improvement to an incipient
stall warning device for aircraft and we fitted it to a Victa Airtourer for a test flight. Unfortunately this aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff. Fortunately the pilot and passenger walked away from the aircraft but I wanted nothing further to do with aircraft.

I took a job as the Production Supervisor at the Besser Roof Tile factory in Wacol. This was the worst job I’ve ever had and I resigned and became a maintenance fitter at the Railway Workshops in Ipswich.

I organised a fishing trip to the Great Barrier Reef and Veikko Tanner was to take us. The lures that worked best were “spoons” but they all soon fell apart. I resolved to make a better one. I bought the stainless steel and the hardware. I made a 10 ton press and metal cutting shears, then the dies to press the blanks. The assembled spoon was then highly polished. Made entirely from stainless steel, there was no galvanic corrosion.

The Port Douglas tackle shop wanted them, so I spent nights and weekends making the “Mirror Spoons”. The business was called Tackle Master and I couldn’t keep up with the demand. At work, I was moved from my maintenance job and sent to the Wheel Shop where I pumped grease into axle bearings. I decided to leave.

But first, I took annual leave, packed samples of my lures, flew to Cairns and then travelled down the coast to Brisbane, stopping at every tackle shop, taking orders totalling over $4,000.

I took a voluntary redundancy and began to manufacture full time. I had three sub-contractors and I made a machine to produce wire forms, a useful piece of kit that allowed me to supply small lure makers.

When Noela was found to have cancer I cared for her for 10 months. She died in 2002. I later sold the business and all the presses and dies went.

I’m now retired and spend my time cooking, buying something to cook or cleaning up after cooking. I also grow my own veggies and make wine. Last year I got a blue ribbon for my mango wine and second place for my mead at the Ekka.

My daughters are tertiary educated; one speaks Japanese, the other Thai. I have three granddaughters and a grandson and to my great delight, they all say they love me.

Life is pretty good.

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DONATIONS AND MONEY MATTERS

For those wanting to make a donation or pay subs, you can make a direct deposit to the Mullumbimby High School Ex-Students Association through the Mullumbimby branch of the Commonwealth Bank,

BSB 06 2578 A/N 1022 4915.

And don’t forget to identify yourself so we know the deposit was made by you.

CONDOLENCES

We offer our condolences to President Neville, his brothers Dennis and Malcolm and their families on the recent passing of their mother. Members with long memories may remember when Mr Marks was the teacher at Main Arm Public School in the 1950s.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please don’t forget to let us know if there are changes to your contact details. Call or email the Secretary mh.exassn@bigpond.com

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A big loss

Some members may remember that when we were setting up the Association, we had a lot of support from the School Community Liaison Officer, Mandy Hallinan.

The funding for this position has always been rather tenuous, but last year we were pleased to hear that it was to be shared between the Mullumbimby and Byron Bay High Schools, and Mandy would therefore continue to have a job that she was extremely conscientious about and very good at.

Now, however, she says it is time to move on and after three years, at the end of last term, she prepared her last Weekly Bulletin for the school.

We wish Mandy all the best for her next adventure and thank her for the help she gave us when we needed it most.