Elections were held at the first AGM at the school on November 20. There were numerous apologies and it was pleasing to see some members from both in town and out. The committee now authorised to continue the work of the interim committee is President, Neville Marks, Treasurer John Robinson, Secretary/Public Officer Robyn Gray, and committee members Pam Morris, Judy Hill and Gillian Lomath. Ben Williams is the school representative. Judy Hill is the membership co-ordinator. The need for a member dedicated to deal with social matters and fund raising is also on the agenda.

From the Interim President’s Report

Neville Marks offered his congratulations to members of the committee on their nomination and subsequent confirmation in their positions on the Interim Committee of Management of the Association. He also thanked Secretary Robyn Gray for keeping the wheels rolling. He said that it was only August ’08 that he got the question from Robyn “Was there ever a plan to form an alumni association?” (for MHS). His report went on to note the steps that have since been taken:

- Drafting the Constitution/Model Rules
- Working out eligibility for membership, taking into account the school has been a Rural School, an Intermediate High (1940) and a full High School (1955).
- Formation of a Steering Committee with ex-students Robyn Gray, John Robinson, Gillian Lomath, and Neville together with the Mullumbimby High School Principal Ian Graham and Community Liaison Officer Mandy Hallinan. Pam Morris and Judy Hill later joined the Interim Committee.
- Drafting the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in consultation with the school. This was later signed and has served as a guide for the interim committee of management. It was ratified at the AGM.
- Devising a membership drive and publicity.
- An Ex-students Newsletter was set up on the School’s Website to give information about joining, to acknowledge new members, spotlight member profiles and to provide a notice board for reunions.

A School representative on the committee was confirmed when Amanda Hallinan, the Community Liaison Officer was nominated by the Principal. Cuts to funding saw the position go, and teacher, Ben Williams has taken over the role as School rep.

From a list of projects suggested by the Principal, the Committee decided to contribute to a new electronic lectern for the John Pearce Auditorium. Founding members made donations and Nicolas Van Horton offered to use his expertise and research an appropriate model.

The development of a Business and Professional mentoring network, tapping into the expertise of ex-students, has been discussed.

The first official function to welcome all members, associates and supporters was held at the home of Gill and Barry Lomath. Neville said that this offered a great social opportunity and it was good that Ian Graham, Principal was able to spend time with the group. He thanked Gill and Barry for opening up their house for a great breakfast.

He finished his report with thanks to members:

“I would like to thank each member of the Steering and Interim Committees for their valued contribution and I look forward with the hope that the Association is very successful in achieving its aims.”
After 4 months of phone calls and endless emails by a group of 5 determined women, Gaye O'Donnell, Tracey Halligan, Michelle McDonald, Helen Bostock and Maree McDonald, the Year 10 Class of 1984 recently held their 25 Year Reunion at the Mullumbimby Leagues Club.

The night was extremely successful and was attended by 85 ex-students and 20 partners. Students travelled from far and wide to attend, coming from Sydney, Brisbane, Gold Coast and many local towns. But we could not go past the effort made by Rina Marinelli who travelled all the way from Singapore. Hats off to Rina!!

The night was a very casual affair with scrumptious finger food supplied by “In Good Taste Catering”, owned and operated by one of our ex-students, Alan Davis and his wife Julie. The beautiful Reunion cake was supplied by another ex-student Maree McDonald (Condon) and her husband Brian from the Mullumbimby Bakery. Once again another ex-student, Trish Thomas (Armstrong) and her husband Paul from Jade Signs in Broken Hill, were responsible for the artwork on our stubbie coolers.

It was fantastic to catch up with everyone, but as always the night just went too quick. A family get together was organised for the next day at Brunswick Heads.

Many requests were made on the night for another reunion in five years. If you were part of the Year 10 Class of 1984, but were not contacted about the reunion, we apologise. We would love to have your contact details for the next one. Please keep in touch through the Ex-Students Association - mh.exassn@bigpond.com

For electronic copies of the constitution or the MoU, ask the Secretary mh.exassn@bigpond.com

**PROFILE - JULIUS MARINELLI - 1971-1976**

“Why Is It So”, an ABC TV children’s science show of the late 1960s, and later tuition by MHS science teachers John Bathie and Bob Summers inspired Julius Marinelli to complete a BSc (Hons) degree majoring in geology at UNE. Born and bred in Mullumbimby, he remembers fossicking along the local creeks and on the family farm at Main Arm, looking for strange volcanic crystals. The old Municipal Council Library also contained interesting information of the earth’s riches occurring locally such as perlite deposits near Minyon Falls, gold veins sought by Chinese prospectors in the Nightcap Range in the late 1800s, and heavy mineral sands mined at Byron Bay in the 1950s-60s. Currently a Senior Exploration Geologist with MMG Ltd at the Century zinc mine in the Gulf country of Queensland, Julius is exploring for zinc and lead deposits to add production life to the world’s second largest zinc mine. Reserves will be depleted by 2015 so the pressure is on to find additional deposits.

His career began with CRA (now Rio Tinto) in Mt Isa in 1984 searching for diamonds, zinc, lead and copper, sometimes living out of a swag for weeks on end, and at other times using helicopters to explore remote terrains. An exploration geologist’s work can mean changes of home base and for Julius these have been towns such as Townsville, Cobar and Karratha. He has had the privilege of seeing outback Australia, been paid for it, and meeting numerous bush characters in the odd isolated pub.

After 25 years in the exploration industry, career highlights for Julius are discovering the 450,000 ounce Agate Creek gold deposit in North Queensland, and supervising the first drilling of the 75 million tonne Admiral Bay lead and zinc deposit in the Great Sandy Desert of northwest WA.

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After 25 years in the exploration industry, career highlights for Julius are discovering the 450,000 ounce Agate Creek gold deposit in North Queensland, and supervising the first drilling of the 75 million tonne Admiral Bay lead and zinc deposit in the Great Sandy Desert of northwest WA. Brisbane has been home for the last 18 years and Julius looks forward to further exploration of Australia’s geological provinces, searching for elusive metals and continuing to practice an evolving young science.

**Year 10, 1984 Reunion by Gaye O’Donnell**

After 4 months of phone calls and endless emails by a group of 5 determined women, Gaye O’Donnell, Tracey Halligan, Michelle McDonald, Helen Bostock and Maree McDonald, the Year 10 Class of 1984 recently held their 25 Year Reunion at the Mullumbimby Leagues Club.

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I left the Mullumbimby area in early 1993. I bided my time working with the Gold Coast Arts Centre performing various tasks. I went on to work in Operations Management with Greater Union Birch, Carroll & Coyle, and whilst there I attended University part-time for a Degree in Business Management. I went overseas and worked in a resort in Nusa Dua in Bali and then moved to Long Beach in Southern California. I picked up work in various clubs and theatres working with sound and lighting. Really loved it and found out how to get the qualifications to work in theatre with Sound Engineering and Lighting Design and Operation. Once qualified, I started working on studio back lots and in time this led to working on mainstream movies. But my real calling was the music and theatre industry. I started working with live bands and enjoyed the fast pace and lifestyle much more. Problems staying in America with permits led me eventually home to Australia.

I went back to an executive lifestyle working as Operations Manager with the Hoyts Corporation, but tired of this after 12 months and went back to the live performances. I have been working in the Australian industry for many years now. I own my own business as well, which is of course, a Theatre, and live shows are a staple.

I have worked with many artists from all parts of the world but my passion is developing the talent of Australian youth. I work with charities, talent and entertainers quests to develop the talent of today, the stars of tomorrow.

When Nicolas read about the project the Association had taken on - to update the lectern and PA system in the John Pearce Auditorium - he was quick to make contact and offer his services. After discussion with the Principal and an inspection of the Auditorium and the facilities it has, he understood the task.

With his professional contacts around the world, Nic has sourced a lectern that is exactly what is required. Fund raising has been going on since the inception of the Association, and funds are to hand for this part of the project.

The second phase is more costly. To upgrade the PA system in the auditorium, amongst other things, microphones, speakers, wiring and sound mixers will be required. Nic believes the hall has the potential to become a very good venue with the right equipment. Again, through his contacts in the business, Nic has been able to tag near new commercial equipment for a very small price - around $2000. However, the Association doesn’t have the funds to extend this far, even at bargain prices, so additions to the fund are being sought. It is hoped to take up the offer of this equipment next term.

Considering the dynamic musical life of the school (apart from the presentations and assemblies that are a normal part of the school program), the complete overhaul of equipment - totalling about $10,000 at full price - is timely.

The lectern to be bought is transparent, will have the school badge etched on the front, and has a slanted book stop/laptop dock and built in cup holder.
The 59ers have a special place in the history of Mullumbimby High. They were the first group to go through the school after it was classified as a High School, from its earlier status as an Intermediate High. Since they went their separate ways, Neville Marks has been behind the reunions they have held to celebrate significant anniversaries, including the school reunion in 2005, marking the 50th anniversary of the High School, which attracted hundreds of ex-students of all ages. The Class of 1959 was the largest matriculating group the school had ever seen. There were 31 of them. In those 50 years, they have lost two of their number. Seventeen came to the 50th anniversary of their 1955-1959 secondary schooling. This report comes from several contributors.

The School visit Saturday afternoon was very interesting and confirmed our thoughts that not a lot remains from our days. The 5th year room remains and has been dedicated to Aboriginal Culture. No cupboard or chimney remains for budding smokers.

After a very nice meal at the Bowling Club, Joe Thompson made a thank you tribute to Neville Marks for his unwavering pursuit of the reunion. This was followed by Nev’s invitation to pass the hat for donations to the Ex-Students Association lectern project. Thanks to the generosity of all present, $230 was raised.

As we all lingered, the bowlers amongst us could not resist the sight of those lovely greens under the lights. A challenge was raised between Joe and Keith Wood and Keith was gracious in defeat. Then came some lessons for Paulette Taylor and Sam Alidenes, as the rest of us looked on.

A letter from Wal Wardman, our Class teacher was read (see page 5 of this newsletter) and it touched us all. Thanks Wal for your valued contribution to our solid grounding at school.

On Sunday morning we gathered at Brunswick to have breakfast. We noticed an interesting contrast to some young people celebrating schoolies week, one that Paulette commented on: “We should have asked them if they would like to see what they will look like in 50 years time” as we were there celebrating our Schoolies, 50 years on.

We decided that as we are not getting any younger we should aim to have our next reunion in two to three years. See you all, then.
Year 12 presentations are emotional occasions for everyone. In the mix of emotions there is relief, apprehension, excitement. Teachers are overcome that their students, like butterflies, are flying away, morphed under their supervision, from immature beings to adults, some already living independently of families, some already parents themselves. When the 59ers had their reunion recently, they shared a letter written by their class teacher, Wal Wardman, a mentor still, after 50 years. It touched them all. This letter describes what he felt as a teacher when the group had finished their Leaving Certificate exams and headed into the world. He also pays tribute to what every group needs: just one person to maintain the address book. He has graciously allowed us to publish his letter in full. It shows that what every Year 12 teacher might hope for, but perhaps never really expects, can happen. The ties made early, can endure.

“Dear Neville,

Thank you for leaving my email address in your 59ers contact list. All year I have been watching your efforts …to organize your 50th anniversary gathering and the establishment of a Mullumbimby High School Ex-students Association.

I am sorry that I am too old and feeble to be with you in November or to participate in the inauguration of the ex-students association, but I will be watching developments on my computer and will be with you in spirit.

The surprising thing is that, as a group, the Fifty-niners seem to be as close as you were in those very pleasant Mullum days. As I spy on your movements on the net and hear reports from the spies I have among you, I enjoy watching the ways in which you work to hold the group together and to support one another. Fifty years or more after you first came together in 1955, the year Mullum became a High School, your group has the characteristics of a close family. May you continue to hang on to those special relationships. I was lucky to be appointed your Class Teacher in 1955 and to be one of the team responsible for nurturing your secondary schooling. It was a very rewarding experience for me.

Back in the fifties, as a young teacher I suffered some of the anxieties of the GP who strives not to do his patients harm. I worked to ensure that those upon whom I was inflicted were not too disadvantaged because they were stuck with me. I remember your relief when your L.C. results more than maintained the academic tradition of those who had preceded you. My relief matched yours.

Foolishly, I worried about the capabilities of the village kids to handle the world beyond the village that your successes in the L.C. opened up for you. How pleased I have been to read your histories and discover how you have asserted your individualities and have become so cosmopolitan in your activities and interests. How very successful you have been in such a variety of ways. What a wide range of experiences you have accumulated as a group and how wonderful it is that through fifty years each of you has followed his own star and still maintained loyalty to the group. Mullum High must have had something to offer to win your lasting loyalty and to encourage you to foster the friendship that was born among you more than fifty years ago.

I look back nostalgically and with great satisfaction on my early years in teaching at Mullumbimby. How fortunate I was in my first year of teaching to have been appointed to a small school where the bonds of friendship between students and teachers were so easy to establish. How rewarding it has been to retain those bonds long after retirement from teaching. Thank you for that sustained friendship over the years. It has been a most treasured possession. Enjoy your anniversary celebrations.

In retirement, may you enjoy good health and happiness and continue to look to one another for friendship and support, as you have done since you came together at Mullum High all those years ago. May your lives in retirement be long enough. And healthy and happy.

Fond memories,

Wal Wardman”