

DANGAR ISLAND

'WINTER' NEWSLETTER

June 1999

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The 'New President' would like to say a few words.

I'm not sure how it happened that I was elected President of the Dangar Island League. It was just that I had accepted Ray Toman's invitation to attend the AGM after he had come to W.E.A.R.'s public meeting that morning at Mooney Workers' Club. It was the least I could do under the circumstances.

I remember Heather Dorough's beguilements and being entreated to accept the nomination. I demurred, saying I'd rather wait to see who would be elected to office and committee. I recall subsequently stating that I did not want the election held before I stated what I wanted from the League and its officials. (Perhaps there was a back door out of this: after all a new job, full time post graduate studies and W.E.A.R. is stretching things a bit and Toni is away and will be no doubt less than sympathetic to my predicament!)

The last time I attended a League meeting, it seems we talked about the same matters as were listed on the agenda at this A.G.M., and that was three years ago!

- McKell Park is shrinking daily and Council is obsessed with designs and usage issues as the foundations collapse and significant erosion occurs daily.
- Sewerage, is the current "biggie", about which I know very little I must confess.
- Non water access residents talking about solutions to mooring for their tinnies. (That one sounded familiar, 1993 was the year we started "playing" with equity, safety etc)
- Muddy pathways for topsiders.
- Dogs.
- Carts, etc. etc.
- And the list goes on.

My "response" was heartfelt, simple and non-negotiable.

Like everyone attending I am in love with the Island and seek ways to make life a little easier for those who live here. Owner and tenant, waterfront owner or not, uplander or lowlander, "native" or "johnny-come-lately", it doesn't matter to me. We all have our place.

"My energies and whatever skills and talents in my possession are at your disposal" I said. "However I choose to follow rather than lead, and you'll have to decide now whether you are committed to *collaborating* with the community to resolve these problems and are willing to put your energies into creating solutions we can all live with. We need as a community to embrace each others' views, not necessarily agree with them, but seek after win/win solutions." (The Mooring Co-op. is a good example.)

"The League needs healthy representation, strong membership, community endorsed directions and sound implementation strategies. Everyone would have to get involved," I said. (At this point all very lofty stuff. The medicine being delivered, I thought I was home free as every one is busy and few people want to carry the load for others!)

To my surprise **everyone** gave his or her commitment. Hence I thought I'd better make it public in the newsletter so as to close the back door as it were. I think we are all fundamentally seeking the same thing for similar reasons, and I believe every person attending that A.G.M. who committed to work for the good of the community is very special and deserving of your support.

I was buoyed by the atmosphere and pledges of support – very heady stuff – and for those who find themselves where the wise hesitate, watch out. A quick show of hands and it was all over. The beginning of a journey that leads I know not where.

1st Priority

We resolved to target the sea wall at Brooklyn and Council's neglect of the erosion problem. (How can they fine a builder in Berowra \$1500 for muddy tire tracks on the road and the "environmental damage" he caused, yet ignore wholesale erosion of "their" [that is "our"], park. I am told that over the years some 15 feet (5 m) of embankment has been lost from the original reclaimed area.

I have asked that we (the League and the Historical Society) research the historical record of this issue and that a time line be constructed of representations, investigations, studies, tests, submissions and financial expenditure, that has been lavished on this simple project to date.

Council should be asked to account for grants and funds emanating from all sources that were have to been utilized in solving this problem. (Terry Dorrough's tenacity and research skills invaluable in this project.)

Should be fun as well as illuminating! This material should also prove to be interesting for the community at large who raise a chuckle at "Yes Minister" and who might be shocked out of their complacency in viewing how common sense can be so corrupted by bureaucratic "nonsense" speak!

Well, there it is. Another windmill to tilt at and a small band of eager Don Quixote's. Many thanks to Ray Toman, the outgoing President, and his committee for keeping the flame burning and passing the baton. He can be especially proud of this newsletter as it is first class and has been a great innovation in his presidency.

NEWS ITEMS

McKell Park Update

Following receipt of the State of the Environment Report the League will write to Council expressing your concerns at the waste of time and money on a simple task of building a sea wall to stop erosion. Consideration is being given to dipping into the war chest and taking Council to the Land and Environment Court over the gross sediment erosion into the waterway they purportedly protect on our behalf.

We demand that work commence immediately i.e. BA/DA, on the wall at least.

There is enough E.I.S. data available now to construct a wall out of copies of studies, consultant's reports, DCP's, LEP's, management plan's, resident's proposals, parking surveys etc **and still not one stone has been put in place!**

We are more interested in controlling foreshore erosion than the location of tourist rotundas and planter boxes. First things first surely, "without prejudice" as to the other works yet to be finalised.

Let's stop the disappearance of our foreshore!

Waterfront Environment Action Reform [WEAR]

The general manager Lands N.S.W. Mr Graham Harding addressed a public meeting at Mooney Workers Club on 15th May and **affirmed the power of his dept. to levy "wet berthing fees of \$300 per boat on crown lands on Dangar Is and at Brooklyn.**

IF YOU DO NOT PAY THIS LEVY NOW, YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO DO SO ON RE-VALUATION.

If you are a member of the mooring co-operative the dept. can levy them too! You may be facing a total charge in future of \$600.00 p.a. to access the island.

The meeting passed [unanimously] a motion calling for the cancellation of this discriminatory and unfair charge on water access only residents. 100 community members, nominated representatives, mooring co-op reps, ratepayer groups from all over the Hawkesbury were present. Notably neither the Labour member for Gosford nor the Liberal member for Ku Ring- Gai attended, and a motion of censure was carried.

Stephen O'Doherty however has submitted a case to the Ombudsmen's Office involving 10 separate examples of the Depts. miss-management, for impartial investigation.

A representative from WEAR will be asked to address the next League meeting so islanders can acquaint themselves with the issues and get involved with this vital work which is proving very effective in bringing about legislative review and reform. Mr Harding has been very sympathetic to

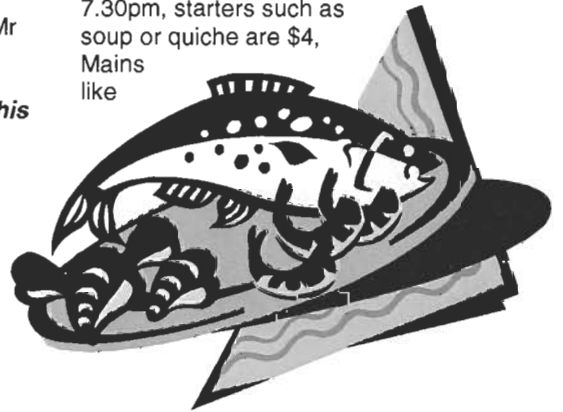
our unique situation and endorses the need to review policy by early 2000.

GET INVOLVED NOW! DON'T WINGE AFTER ITS TOO LATE, THINGS ARE MOVING FAST.

DANGAR ISLAND BOWLING CLUB

The patronage of the Club has seen a significant increase now that we are fully licenced and this has encouraged us to provide some new services to members. In addition to our popular **Friday Night Dinners** prepared by Chef Sari, the Club now hosts a **Saturday Night Bistro** where members and their guests can enjoy an economically priced meal. The Bistro is opened from 5.30pm to 7.30pm, starters such as soup or quiche are \$4,

Mains like



lasagne and salad, curries, Thai meatballs and noodles are \$7.95 and a range of Desserts including baked cheesecake, strudel and bread and butter custard are available for \$3.50. Kids meals are also available for \$4.00. Booking is advisable to ensure a place and to assist with catering and preparation. Phone the Club on 99857083 and leave a message if unanswered.

The Club is considering introducing **FOXTEL** for members which would provide live coverage of **Rugby League**, Rugby Union, Motor Sports, Golf, Cricket etc as well as **first run movies**. Member sponsorship is needed, for only \$10 per month you can have access to FOXTEL programs. (This compares to \$200 for the satellite dish and \$50 per month for home use). A number of sponsors have already come forward and less than 10 are required. If you are interested, and would like more

information, phone Rod Walker on 99857352.

We are keen to introduce newcomers to the game of Bowls. **A bistro and bowls package** is now available on a Saturday from 3pm. For \$15 per person (adults only) you can have free coaching, a game of bowls and a three course bistro meal. Why not get together with some friends and give bowls a try over 250,000 Australians play bowls every week so there must be something to it. Tickets need to be pre purchased, phone Rod Walker 99857352.

Thanks to the work of the Dangar Island Bush Regeneration Group the Club has been able to purchase a large number of native plants and will shortly commence developing native gardens around the Club and Green. In particular plantings of Pandorea (a woody native climber) will be made around the green fence line and on the northern banks. This should add to the bush setting of this area.

The Club also works in partnership with the Dangar Island Historical Society. The Society has a permanent display of historical photographs in the Club and conducts historical walks, at \$1 per person, for visiting groups. this style for the regular text of your articles.

Dangar Island Ferry Service.

Dear Dangar Island Residents,

Believe it or not it has been 9½ years since we began operating the Ferry Service. During that time we have seen the children grow, the population change (many times) but the island still remains a beautiful place to live.

In recent months you will have heard rumours regarding the sale of our ferry business. This seems to be the case. The sale of the ferries and business is currently progressing and new owners are expected to take over on 1st July 1999. Sun and Hawkesbury Star will remain on the river and on the ferry run as required. Little is expected to change.

There will be a sausage sizzle for past and present school children at 11.30am to 1.30pm on Saturday 3rd July 1999 (at the Bowling Club) and at 4.00pm an introduction of the new ferry owners to

islanders. So come along and meet the new owners, all welcome.

As for Garth, myself, Trent and Michelle, we have no definite plans for the future. We are however planning, what we believe to be - a well earned holiday. We take from the ferries - everlasting memories, some good and some not so good.

Garth and I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank a few people who have made the last nine and a half years just that little bit easier, through their constant support and words of encouragement - Joe Reid, Margaret Ferrier, Ray Witchard, Jim Rae, Jim and Janet Howe, John and Margaret Nolan and Sheila Walker.

To all our ferry passengers past and present thank you for your patronage. Best wishes to you all.

Regards,

Garth and Joanne Cameron and Family.

And 'thank you' to you too Garth and Joanne The ferry service is important to many of us. Good luck in the future.

Dangar Island small businesses

Do you have a small business on or around Dangar Island that you would like people to know about? Then bless me, advertising in the newsletter is for you. The price is the best advertising dollar you will ever spend. **It's free!** So off the rear end now, and send the desired message to the 'League' via the Dangar Store.

'Hydro-Hoons' are still active.

Boat owners with high powered engines, please slow down at night. You may just save someone's life, which could be your own. There is an accident waiting to happen out there. Remember that:

- ◆ In our river submerged logs and unthinking people in unlit tinnies and rowboats are common.
- ◆ Most boats do not have headlights.
- ◆ Boats do not have brakes.

The following people have been elected to the League at the last AGM meeting:

President: Neil Renfree

Vice President: Leonie Toman

Secretary: Lindee Horman

Treasurer: Manfred Merle

Committee members:

Heather Dorrrough

Terry Dorrrough

Elizabeth Trevena

Dennie Gurney

The Dangar Island Bush Regeneration Group

The May Festival of native plants was utilised by many residents to buy the indigenous plants of the Island, and find out how to eradicate their garden weeds. If anyone would like more information or a copy of the booklet 'Australian Plants of Dangar Island for your garden', please contact our group.

We live in such a unique river environment that it is important to understand what is around us, and the impact humans have on it.

We are also compiling a 'Fauna Study' of the Island. Our group would like the assistance of any residents who would like to become involved. The type of information we are seeking includes:

Birds: Type or appearance, locality and weather they nest on the Island. Or are they migratory.

Possoms: Type or appearance, locality and habitat.

Lizards: Type or appearance, locality and habitat.

Snakes, marsupials, insects, ants, frogs and toads: Type or appearance, locality and habitat.

If anyone has information on previous studies, a copy would be very helpful to make comparisons over the course of time.

Children are very welcome to participate by descriptions of fauna via colour,

sounds, shapes, time and place either by text or drawing, or both. Further research can be done either at school or with the family.

The study will be done over a number of months to cover seasons, and clearly will take time to collate.

It is very important not to disturb the Fauna or their habitat but just to observe and describe. Maybe there are animals you noticed when you first came to the Island, that are not here anymore. There is also an ongoing study of Flora on the Island so we would like to know if there are plants not listed in the booklet.

All mail should be left at the shop addressed to:

The Dangar Island Bush Regeneration Group
C/- Sarah Galvin

The "Access" Committee Report

This committee feels that the D. I. League can only handle one major objective at a time and is happy for the current major objective to be the reinstatement of the seawall at Brooklyn.

Other possible objectives identified by this committee are as follows:-

1. Improvement to the pontoon at the D.I. Public Wharf.
2. Improvement to the stair access at Brooklyn Railway Station.

Points 1. and 2. are major objectives, requiring a lot of input.

3. D. I. South Beach erosion
4. Sealed and gravelled roadways on Island in certain places
5. Stormwater gutters to be re-lined with stone.

Points 3.4. and 5. Are "environmental" objectives requiring liaison with Hornsby Council and the Dangar Island Bushcare group.

6. Signage – public toilets, this committee does not like the idea of more council signs on the island and suggests the possibility of a map in the "weathershed" with indications of the features of the Island (including the location of the public toilets). Plus the native flora and fauna on the island – Drawings – colours.

Anyway the group is concentrating on the seawall problem. Discussion about any of the above topics is welcomed.

Dog Control on Dangar Island

Unfortunately there have been reported cases of innocent pedestrians being confronted by UNLEASHED dogs. It is becoming evident that there is an uncaring attitude regarding dogs roaming the Island.

This has health and safety implications, particularly regarding children in the playground. Residents are reminded of the Hornsby Council Regulations relevant to the keeping of dogs: These regulations do apply to Dangar Island.

- We are required to pick up our dog's droppings in any public place. Please remember they are obnoxious, offensive and dangerous to human health
- Dogs must be kept clear of children's playground equipment (10 metres), and places like the General Store.
- Any dog not controlled by a leash, is considered a roaming dog, and is at risk of seizure by the Council Animal Control Officers.

We are looking for some genuine goodwill on this issue, and suggestions to improve the situation would be appreciated. It would be awful to have to fence the children's playground.

Letters to the Editor.

The opportunity does exist to make your views known to other Islanders in this newsletter. It's simple, just write to me via the General Store. The topics are unlimited, but please, your letter should not be too long. Lets say 200-300 words. For example:

Dear Ed,

I too am quite concerned about Sea-wall at Brooklyn. The worst aspects for me are writing big cheques for 'Council Rates', and walking in mud. (Water walking soon). I know the HSC cares little for the unique needs of Island people. The usual story about being different.

I have however a few ideas on what might be done. These include:

1. 'No-Confidence' petition about the HCS.
2. Withholding 'Rates' and paying for the wall that way.
3. Approaching the Local Government Minister and complaining.
4. Instigating ourselves a 'Work for the Dole' project with the Feds.

Frankly any amount of talking or writing just does not get through. They seem to be more interested in historical trees than Ratepayer needs. Incidentally, do you know if any money is being set aside in next year's HSC budget for the sea-wall? If not, the intentions of HSC becomes indisputable and visible to all of us. Eddie of Dang.

Dear Eddie,

Clearly we all share your frustration, and you make some strong points there. Too be honest, I don't know the answer to the budget question. Not too sure about the legality of one or two of your suggestions either. However, perhaps we should invite the HSC Mayor to the June 26th League meeting. That way he can visit the wall on the way over. (He will need his gumboots if it's raining). For myself I believe the HSC should advise Islanders precisely what is proposed, and exactly the timetable. If that appears unsatisfactory, Islanders can decide what should be done next. Eddie, thank you for letter, I will approach the League immediately to extend an invitation. He could take in a little Island sightseeing during the visit, and share some of our 'pre-meeting' hospitality.

The next meeting of the Dangar Island League will be on Saturday the 26th June at 4.00 PM in the Community Hall.