



PRINT · RADIO · TASMANIA · INC
turning print into sound

CLIPPINGS

President's report

A lot has happened since our last newsletter and there have been many quite significant things happening at our vibrant little station.

On your behalf I would like to say thank you to Maureen Rudge who stepped down at the last Annual General meeting as President of 7RPH. Maureen has been central to the success which the station has enjoyed and has helped guide it into its currently very strong position, cementing it firmly on the broadcasting map in Tasmania. I am pleased to say that Maureen will still continue as a volunteer and present her regular evening programme.

Still talking about our people, Bett Minchin has decided to step back from the microphone after over twenty-five years on air. I would like to pay tribute on your behalf to Bett and thank her for her dedicated service to RPH. We can look forward to catching up with her at our Christmas drinks function.

Our Strategic Plan is now well and truly in place and we are busily implementing many of its objectives and actions. For example, the Location sub-committee recommended, and the Committee of Management has endorsed the recommendation that we would be remaining at our current location for at least the next five years. However, we will be working towards



getting into our own premises as well as providing some additional longer term volunteer parking next door, and working with our landlord to hopefully make some other internal building improvements.

The technical upgrading of our equipment, computers, programmes and systems continues apace with great support from Jim Parish, Anders Marchant and Ron Anderson. They always seem to be at the station regularly working on improvements and changes at all hours of the day and night. Some unkind colleagues even suggested that they were sleeping at the station. Their work means that we can now focus our volunteer resources on live broadcasting at peak times. We are also actively pursuing a transmitter licence for Devonport which would truly let us boast that our voice covers the whole of Tasmania.

Our breakfast show and readings from *The Australian* have been introduced and we have already received favourable comments from our listeners. We now broadcast *The Mercury* and *The Examiner* simultaneously to Launceston and Ho-

Hello to everyone

Welcome to our final newsletter for 2009. It has a great mix of information and experience. There is an article from a much-relieved Manager Philip French who has now subsided into annual leave. There is a thank-you note from Mel our Assistant Manager who does more than has ever been set out in a position statement, there's news from the raffle committee for diligent ticket-sellers and there are two longer articles from volunteers who present you with life experiences that are totally fascinating. I'll be in the UK for December, celebrating Christmas in an externally icy but wonderful family environment. I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a safe, friendship-filled New Year with RPH.

—Helen Martin—editor

bart. Philip French has been the main architect of this change. Thanks go to Philip whose great planning ensured a seamless and trouble free implementation.

Volunteer training has commenced and will continue. A number of other things are in the pipeline, but we hope that you can see that not only do we listen to our volunteers' ideas, suggestions and requests, but they are actively being implemented through the Strategic Plan.

Finally, let me say thank you for the opportunity for me to take on the job of President of 7RPH and I look forward to further exciting times as we continue to grow and expand our services for the print handicapped in Tasmania.

For more information on developments, please contact me.

Miles Flanagan



FROM THE MANAGER'S DESK

As everyone is aware, the station has undergone major surgery, with an estimated one thousand changes in our new programming formats.

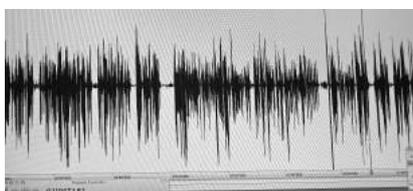
I acknowledge that it has been an unsettling and nervous gestation period since the 5th October for all presenters and readers. However, the new baby is very much alive and kicking due to everyone's commitment and warm embracing. The Breakfast Shows are settling down nicely to be very smooth, interesting, and informative half hours. The readings from *The Australian* are a great addition and the simultaneous readings from *The Mercury* and *The Examiner* has eliminated much duplication.

Thank you everyone. I will now have my nervous breakdown, known as some annual leave.

Philip French

FROM YOUR PRODUCER

Do you read for a programme that is recorded by a producer? Next time, after you read, ask your producer to show you the computer screen showing your reading. It may help your understanding of the process.



To the unsung heroes of the station

Thanks to:

1. The hand-towel washer
2. Those people who wash up
3. The coffee cup collector (and washer)
4. The people who return paper-clips
5. Those who cook (for their delicious cakes)
6. Those who empty the bins from the studios and the kitchen
7. The note-writers, letting us know that something needs attention
8. The phone-message-takers, particularly those after-hours
9. Those who leave the studios tidy

These heroes make the station a nicer place.

Mel Lee

More volunteers required

With all the programming changes that have occurred over the last month or so we are calling on our current volunteer base more than we have ever done in the past. It is thanks to this generous donation of time by our volunteers that we have been able to introduce more live programmes and locally produced content.

But radio is a very hungry beast and we are needing more and more volunteer time which ultimately translates into a need for more volunteers. Therefore, if you have any friends or acquaintances who you think would be interested in volunteering and helping to prepare papers, read or record, please get them to contact the station or give us their details and we can arrange a meeting or audition.

Also, we would welcome an approach from any of our existing volunteers who would like to step up to produce programmes live to air or, to produce recorded programmes.

We are hoping to run a course for new producers and presenters early next year.

It is great fun and very satisfying to produce and present programmes, and it is a skill-set we are really short of right now.

Please let Margaret Gibbs or Mel Lee know of your interest as soon as possible.

Miles Flanagan

Important reminder for readers

It is really important that all readers arrive at least 15 minutes before any reading shift commences. This ensures that your presenter and fellow reader(s) can allocate articles, do the required pre reading, and have plenty of time to settle in the studio before the program goes to air. This is even more critical on weekends when the presenter is the only one available to open the front door. Arriving late can cause major disruptions to our on air programs.

Obviously there may be emergency situations when people are delayed or unavailable. When this is the case please ring and let the station know your circumstances as early as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Please ensure you arrive early for every shift, it is really important.

Whew... after a full two and a half days of filming, sitting around and re-takes, the ABC *Collectors* programme have cobbled together almost *four full minutes* of filming Basil and Janet Smith's collection of Punch and Judy memorabilia and gypsy-wagons. The producer said it would take about another full day of editing the "rough takes" before it was honed to go to air.

What if... Philip, Mel and all of the RPH producers had to spend so much time and effort into making a four -minute programme to go to air? Do you think we would all cope?

Anyway, Basil and Janet can be viewed on the ABC at 8.00pm on the *Collectors* on 20 November.

As Punch would say, 'That's the way to do it'.



Volunteers' training night

As was agreed during our strategic planning process, training for volunteers was high on the priority list and our first volunteers' training night was held on 24 September at the Davey Street studios. The aim of the training was to provide additional knowledge and skills for volunteers in order to improve broadcast quality and enhance the listening experience of our audience.

Some fourteen volunteers were divided into two groups. Each group participated in both of the sessions 'The live mike' and 'An effective voice through pace, volume and pitch'.

We invited a professional speech and drama teacher to lead us. Unfortunately, Darren Sangwell was unable to come because of illness, but in his place we welcomed Chris Cherry. She first led us through some relaxation exercises, and then worked on voice. To quote from her notes, which she kindly distributed:

Any work on voice should encompass not only the development of vocal quality, but also communication effectiveness. For the listener a voice that is lively, interesting and varied is more appealing than one that is not. We should aim to use our voice effectively to convey successfully the full range of thoughts and emotions. This can be done by increasing and varying pace, using pause effectively, and varying volume and pitch. When we are com-



mitted to the ideas and emotions being expressed, we are than free to introduce this spontaneity into the voice.

Miles ran the other session, 'The live mike' in one of the studios. Each participant donned a set of headphones and watched a computer monitor as Miles ran through all of the unintended but highly audible noises that went to air during live broadcasts. They ranged from just brushing the microphone, rustling paper, bumping the desk, noisy clothing and off mike conversations. For



some volunteers it was the first time they had listened through headphones and actually seen the wave forms of voice and sound on a screen.

After both groups had participated in both workshops which each ran for about 35 minutes, we adjourned to the volunteers room for a glass of wine, a few nibbles and some lively discussion about the sessions.

Several people have told us that they are not available to attend evening sessions, so we will be holding another volunteers' training session during the day in the near future, so keep your eyes on the notice board. For more information contact Margaret Gibbs.



Margaret Gibbs has fun with Chris Cherry as she recites Little Jack Horner but using intonation to indicate irritation.

Have fun with intonation

Answer the question 'Is your favourite colour blue?'
Respond with 'no' to convey:

- Doubt — I'm not sure
- Certainty — Certainly not
- Boredom — What a silly question
- Irritation — Why are you asking
- Disgust — I can't stand the colour
- Questioning — Why, should it be?

Notice how the voice changes in pitch and alters in pace, according to the response.

Christmas Raffle

You've probably noticed the large basket filled to the brim with Christmas goodies sitting in the Volunteers' room.

Well you've guessed right! It's part of Print Radio's Christmas celebrations and we are asking volunteers to sell tickets so that the prize-winning entry(ies) can be drawn at our Christmas party on Sunday 6th December. First prize is of course the basket, with several mystery prizes on offer for the second and third tickets drawn out.

Each volunteer will soon be given a small book of tickets to sell for either \$1.00 each or 3 for \$2.00, with money and ticket stubs to be returned to RPH by Friday 4th December at the latest please. If you are a champion ticket seller, you are welcome to ask for more books. Thank you for your help.



*Cath Lennard and
Belinda Kendall-White*

VISION LOSS EXPO

The annual Vision Loss Expo was held in Hobart at the Wrest Point Casino last month and 7RPH was invited to participate. We set up a stand which attracted a lot of interest and Philip French made a formal presentation to the seminar.

There were some ten exhibitors which ranged from federal and state government departments, equipment suppliers, ophthalmologists, optometrists and other NGOs such as Guide Dogs Australia and 7RPH.

The seminar was well attended with a number of other interesting speakers including the keynote

speaker Doctor Verma, who gave a very interesting and thought-provoking speech on vision loss and provided some easy preventative measures to avoid or reduce vision loss and macular degeneration.

All in all it was a very worthwhile afternoon and we added a large number of new listeners to our program mailing list. It is a free annual event, held in September each year at Wrest Point, so keep a lookout for it next year.

For more information contact Philip French or Miles Flanagan

GET INVOLVED ON RPH COMMITTEES

With the new Committee of Management in place we are reinvigorating the activities of our committees and looking for greater involvement of members. You would have already noticed the work of the Fundraising Committee hard at work with the Christmas Hamper.

We would welcome anyone who is interested in working on any of these committees and making a further contribution to the station. Please contact the chairperson of the committee and let them know of your interest.

Here are the committees:

Fundraising – Katie Holness
Programming – Debbie le Grande
Publicity and Promotion – Belinda Kendall-White
Quality Assurance and Training – Margaret Gibbs
Location and Facilities – Miles Flanagan

Some people have already put their hands up so please join them. We need all the help and support we can get.

Please contact the appropriate committee chairperson.

Joan Bowden tells of a special friend

Self-sown plant: one of several definitions for volunteer in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, and one I particularly liked. I pondered how it related to readers and presenters at RPH as many of us would have felt in unfamiliar territory when we first arrived at the rooms in Davey St. Like most self-sown plants we flourished and settled in our new area and, through RPH, I've met people I would otherwise have been unlikely to encounter before what is euphemistically called, retirement. Anyway, who wants to retire from life?

I received a bonus from my readings with RPH because of a yellow notice on a wall at the station. It invited anyone interested in genealogy and astronomy to read, on a weekly basis, to a vision impaired, elderly resident at a retirement village. I had used some of my spare time to update my own genealogy research; had attended a short course on astronomy with Adult Education and liked reading aloud. "Why not?"

A brief telephone conversation resulted in my introduction to the small, dapper, ninety-year old John who suffered the frustrations of macular degeneration and hearing loss. My work in Special Education, personal experience of hearing-impairment in others, and working with a vision-impaired student had given me some insight into the difficulties these people experienced, so I would have no problems with John.

His agile brain, independent spirit and sense of humour soon endeared him to me and, as an only child who had never married, he did not have many relatives.

He looked forward to our weekly sessions and I would look for interesting articles on things of interest to him in local papers and magazines. To the consternation of cleaning staff, his files and boxes of genealogical research took a lot of space in his room and in the last year of his life, he was told that he had to remove them, but that is a story in itself.

His research into his English ancestry here and in the UK was huge and his recall of who was related to whom, as far back as the 16th century, never failed to amaze me as he rarely had to refer to documents. He shared many memories of his extensive travels with me and as a narrator he excelled.

Our friendship developed rapidly and I came to the conclusion that perhaps I was doing for John what I would have wished to do for my father who had died when I was three years old. I told him this when he asked one day why I was so kind to him, but I also assured him that I liked him for himself. He



then said that I was like a daughter and after our mutual admiration session we laughed at our seriousness: perhaps we filled a need in each other.

A little more than two years after our meeting the pace of a developing, terminal illness accelerated and he, with his white stick, could no longer shop alone so we would go in my car. Bank tellers and shop staff would greet him as an old friend, as did the dentist when his dentures, or his one remaining tooth, needed attention.

But eventually I was shopping for him whilst he remained at the village.

Most of my visits during his last months were spent writing letters for him, reminiscing and chatting; reading and research receding into the background.

John died on 6 September 2005 and I missed him, but without RPH I would have missed many special times spent with a friend.

Joan Bowden, 2009

Making shadow-puppets: another dying art

Many forms of mass entertainment are dying out in our modern world, and often the associated traditional craftsmanship that goes with them is dying out as well.

For more than 2,000 years, shadow-puppet shows have provided entertainment for generations of Chinese. They were universally popular because they were an inexpensive and easily portable way of entertaining lots of people who spoke many different dialects.

Originally used as a news medium to bring details of recently fought battles or local events, in more recent times puppet shows have included folklore and history. The shadow-puppet troupe would wander from village to village and could give as many shows as required, usually in the open air. Their only props were several exquisitely made and light puppets, a screen made from mulberry paper and a few musical instruments. A traditional shadow-puppet troupe comprises five people. One person operates the puppets, with amazing dexterity, three play musical instruments and one sings or speaks the accompanying dialogue.

More than fifty troupes existed in Beijing alone. But these days performances are limited to school holidays, and to large cities where there are



foreign tourists. A small village about two hours south-east of Beijing used to be famous both for making puppets for the Beijing area, and for its performances. Now, in the village of Lao Ting there are just two craftsmen left who make puppets in the traditional way, using the dried belly skin of a donkey.

Today shadow-puppets are a great favourite with Western tourists. But they don't buy puppets

to use them. They prefer to take them home, frame them and hang them on the wall as a memento of their visit to China. These, sold to tourists are machine-made from brightly coloured plastic sheets and even the ones which claim to be hand-made are usually machine-made and only the head and limbs are assembled by hand.



The traditional craftsmen draw an intricate pattern of the puppet on paper. Next the donkey skin is stretched tightly over a waxed wooden disc. The design is then pricked through the paper pattern onto the skin. Afterwards the pattern pieces are cut out from the skin with a very sharp instrument. The skin has first been treated to make it pliable and then is stretched until it is as thin as tissue-paper, and almost transparent.

Each piece of the puppet is hand-painted in traditional colours using mainly vegetable dyes. Finally, the pieces are varnished and then slotted together. The puppets then look almost as though they are made from glass with the colours shimmering in the light. Thread is used only to join the moveable joints such as fingers and arms. Just one traditional puppet produced in this way takes up to two weeks to complete and some have more than three thousand cuts - thus it's a dying art.

*Mary Price
in China*