

Meet Jane Smith our new Mayor

The new Mayor is excited by her job. As I sit down to interview her, she is open and forthcoming, ready to acknowledge the job won't be easy. But she's been

going to Council for twenty years herself, sat on many committees and has an exceptional two years in the role.

"I've had an open mind about the amalgamation," she says. "There's nothing wrong with big organisations per se, they can be efficient. The catch is how well represented people feel they are. We have to effectively reach out to our communities. We have to engage." Jane talks about doing this via pop-up stalls at markets, for example, train station encounters and other mechanisms such as workshops. They have a special person dedicated to facilitating interaction with communities.

I say it won't be easy with Avoca because the mood is depressed. Many people feel that there is so much development now of the Terrigal type that the quiet village atmosphere we dreamt of retaining is already gone. Jane spoke about the importance of the Government's ten-year strategic plan now getting underway and the consultation which will take place. I pointed out that we've taken part in numerous studies during the 2000's, great visions which came to nothing.

We ourselves did a professional survey of Avoca in the mid 2000's which was submitted to Council. Key findings: people wanted the low-key atmosphere of Avoca retained, wanted new sporting facilities, new residences to be screened by green. None of that came about. But the new Mayor is both an optimist and an activist and so probably nobody is better placed both to listen and act. If things are not working she wants to find out.

> She said she's open at some point in the future to a referendum as to how the amalgamation is going if that seems appropriate.

> I suggest that it's hard for Council to be responsive when we will have just one councillor for over twenty thousand residents. I've done research overseas and it's clear that such a ratio is a recipe for trouble. I've recently been in an English town where the ratio was one councillor to four hundred people. In New Zealand the ratio outside of cities seems not to rise above one to five thousand. These low ratios prevent problems from developing. People's voices are

better heard. The mayor said she'd be happy to read what I'd found out. I suggested Council do its own overseas research.

The community has been thrilled by Bob Pickett's generous offer of land for sporting fields. Whilst acknowledging Bob's generosity, Jane said she can't support the idea because Bob insists that his gift be matched by council releasing some COSS land next to his to join the scheme.

What Bob proposes is exactly what council can't allow to happen, committed as it is to protecting COSS, always under threat. But we do need more sporting fields and a way forward on this generous offer needs to be found, we believe, if Avoca is to be optimistic about the future. MR



President's Report

Firstly, a huge thank you to outgoing president, Carol Fortey, and her committee. Carol came to this position at a time when this Association was in grave danger of folding and revived it. I can only hope to build on the great job she has done. Thank you also to the outgoing

Treasurer Paul Kirby. We welcome our new Treasurer Ian Carruthers.

I am convinced that a strong community association can give our community a voice and have an impact on local issues. We exist as a community service and can only truly represent the Avoca Beach Community if residents get involved, give us feedback and let us know what concerns them, what they love and would like to preserve or improve. It is our intention to establish meaningful and open communications with the newly elected Councillors and to keep Council on the ball with matters relevant to Avoca Beach.

Here's a sample of issues being

dealt with by your association as a result of our last
meeting The proposed development of Bowtell's
Caravan Park on the Round Drive has attracted
significant opposition from local residents with a large
number of submissions opposing the development. The
ABCA has written to the new councillors asking them to
respect the views of so many local residents who will be
affected by this development. We have been informed
that DA causing so much concern has been withdrawn.
We wait for the amended DA and remain concerned
about work continuing on the site.

We have written to the new Mayor, Jane Smith, and our other two councillors of the Gosford East ward, Jeff Sundstrom and Rebecca Gale Collins, inviting them to our next meeting (4th December). This will be a test of their willingness to truly represent their constituents.

The water quality of Avoca Beach has been in the news lately with a poor rating delivered by the experts. Our vice president, Angela Kennedy, investigated this and found that the news is not all bad.

(See article page 3)



Steve Fortey

The Ficus Ave toilet block is to externally upgraded, Council informs us. Of concern is that the mural will be bagged and painted over. This area and the mural have special significance to the Avoca Board riders club, who meet in the grassed area alongside it. We have written to Council asking them to liaise with the Board riders and look at replacing the mural. We also pointed out that the inside of this building is badly in need of an upgrade.

The donation of land for sporting fields by Mr Bob Pickett continues to be an issue and the ABCA thanks Bob for his generous offer. The sticking point is a small parcel of

COSS land controlled by Council needed to make this initiative work. We have written to Council in support of this proposal. Two extra playing fields would be a huge bonus for our community.

Finally, a big thanks to Mike Rubbo, the driving force behind this newsletter and the man responsible for bringing the characters of our great beachfront community to life. We not only have an exceptional natural location, it is chock full of unique and talented characters.

A warm invitation to you all to our next meeting on Monday 4th December, 7.30 pm at the Surf Club.

Avoca Beach Community Association Inc.

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Avoca's "Poor" Water Quality

On a sparkling morning in early October as the Lizards waded back to the beach, exhilarated from their 8am swim Con Ryan said to his mate, "You won't find cleaner water than that anywhere". So how could it be that Avoca's water quality had been rated as "poor" just

a week earlier by the State's Beachwatch?

Beachwatch 's

We asked the Central Coast Council that same question. Ecologist Vanessa McCann, who works for the Council's Waterways Dept. said that our beaches are tested every week during the lifeguard season and that Avoca's water was "really pretty good". But the wet weather last summer meant that there had been pollution from storm water drains connected directly to the beach and also from the

opening of the lake. Vanessa pointed out it was not all bad news and that 93% of dry weather water samples showed that Avoca was a good place for a swim.

Still needing reassurance we asked, what about the sludgy, foamy water we sometimes see flowing around the point from the south? Does the sewerage outfall at Winnie Bay impact Avoca? Vanessa said that this issue had been examined and there was "no problem" with

the tertiary treated effluent from the Winnie Bay outfall.

She said that sometimes the water might look dirty but that this was due to sediment and not to toxic contaminants.

Weekly water quality results can be seen on the Council's website under 'Beachwatch".

We can all help to protect our lovely beach by taking responsibility for what ends up in our storm water drains and by leaving the beach litter-free.

We can support programs like #take3forthesea and The Friends of Avoca cleanup day. AK



Central Coast Club Champions

Avoca Beach Rugby Club's juniors had a very successful 2017 season, taking out the CCJRU Club Championship. In the competition ages most teams made it to the playoffs with the u13s, u14s, u16s and u17s all making the Grand Finals at Central Coast Stadium, an outstanding effort. On that day the u16s defeated Ourimbah and the u17s defeated Warnervale to bring home the Premiership trophies. With the u19s also successful, the quality of players in the two oldest Junior ages shows that the long term future for the Senior Club looks bright.

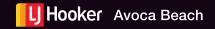
Another fantastic result from the season was the number of young players in the non-competition ages. Three u7 teams, two u8 and two u9s meant that early Saturday morning at Heazlett Park was a busy place with the youngest Sharks having lots of fun running around with their mates.

It has been a breakthrough season for u16 player Eden McQueen who was selected to play for NSW in the recent National Championships. Our Under 16's Premiership winners:

It was also great to see the revival of girls 7s rugby at the end of the season. We look forward to more opportunities for the girls in 2018. The Club has a women's team in the Central Coast 7s, captained by local player Cobie-Jane Morgan who has represented Australia in both 7s and 15s. SF

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All you need is help. Help is all you need.

Scott Fortey confirms a theory, which I have long held. That if you have a job helping people, especially in some dramatic way, you're going to be a pretty fulfilled person.



As I talked to Scott at his house in Avoca, he does radiate a certain contentment and he'd probably admit that it comes from the trips he's made overseas as an anaesthetist with a voluntary organisation called Interplast. He calculates he's made twenty trips with them, usually about two weeks each though when he went to help with the aftermath of the tsunami at Bande Ache, that was three weeks away, a time never to be forgotten.

Most of the time the teams that Scott's a part of are doing reconstructive plastic surgery. On a two-week trip if the operation is small like repairing cleft lips/palates, they might do one hundred. It's so satisfying to help a little baby who can't breathe and eat properly because of a congenital deformity of a cleft lip/palate and then over the next few days see that same baby sucking on a bottle like there was no tomorrow. He remembers the name of such a baby in Indonesia and how he felt as he went past and saw the happy baby going full tilt at the bottle.

We've added some photos here, one of Scott with a tiny baby just operated on. Next, a young woman before and after her cleft red lip has been repaired. As well as doing facial repairs, the teams work on a lot of burns. Countries like Bangladesh use small cooking stoves which often cause accidents and some cases, as we know, women are intentionally burnt and disfigured.

Scott's job is often to - and this is a word I didn't know - intubate the patients. Get a breathing tube down their throat and keep it functioning so the surgeon can work. Often they are working on two tables side-by-side with him the only anaesthetist, something that would never

happen in Australia but given the need is justifiable. So Scott is bopping from table to table to make sure his patients stay properly anaesthetised.

Another terrible injury typical of Bhutan and Bangladesh is people who have been mauled by bears. Apparently Himalayan black bears which look quite friendly and cuddly have a nasty habit of ripping the lower part of people's faces off. The bear's claw downwards taking a lot skin, and sometimes the jaw. Reconstruction in such cases requires they work with what are called free flaps, skin and bone taken from other parts of the body and used to build up and mould a new lower face for the victim.

"It won't necessarily look so pretty", says Scott but our aim is to get people functioning again so they can eat and talk

and we usually succeed." No vanity surgery on this job.

He admits that his most amazing trip was to Banda Aceh. Beside the airport as they arrived was a mass grave with forty thousand people in it. He shows me a photograph taken earlier by a Japanese photographer of the parking lot behind the hospital. It's full of bodies on their backs, knees slightly bent and many with hands in the air as if reaching up for help, rigor mortis he says.

It was amazing to see the world's aid resources descending on Banda Aceh. The German army, the American Navy with the their hospital ship, the "Mercy", the Spanish, the Indonesians themselves, all there with the best equipment they could bring.

"Yet you are just not prepared for what the force of nature can do," Scott says, remembering the massive electric generator ship forced 4 km inland and near the coast, every building flattened except the Mosque, spared because of its open structure, allowing the water to flow through it. He speaks of an Australian friend Dave who lived in Banda Aceh with his Indonesian wife. On that Boxing Day in 2004, people came to tell them that the sea was receding strangely, and that many people were running out to collect flapping fish. Dave guessed what it meant and with his family, drove for the hills.

They all survived.

But so far that's Scott's only experience of a disaster. Mostly this reconstruction is a result of birth defects or accidents. Some of the most serious cases are brought to Australia but Scott thinks it's much better to fix problems on the spot. Firstly it means approx. \$200,000 is not spent in Australia and can be used locally and secondly, they find that patients who have spent months in Australia, undergoing operation after operation and a totally different lifestyle, don't reintegrate that well when they go home.

Where does the funding come from? Much of it comes from Rotary, which raises money for InterPlast, an organisation set up by the Australasian College of Surgeons and Rotary in 1983. As well as Rotary, generous individuals give huge donations to InterPlast and some surely get great satisfaction if they happen on one of Scott's PowerPoint presentations.

There are forty or fifty Interplast trips a year going to Asia-Pacific doing this sort of work with many teams on the go at once. He and his wife Carol, who we know as our recently retired president of the Community Association, calculate that they've been apart for at least forty weeks over the last 17 years. MR







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The bar of Philippe Bauve

Under Philippe's house is a cave-like bar. There the ceiling's low, the candles glow and the stories flow.

This is not a commercial enterprise I hasten to add. Everything is free and friendly, a place where the problems of the world get hotly debated and sometimes solved.



Philippe's a jovial Frenchman, a character of strange power. Three times, once in Nepal, once in a Buddhist situation and once in Melbourne, he's given away a bride who was not his daughter. He just gets asked to do that sort of thing because he looks the part.

For us locals he's often seen walking his tiny dog Harry on the beach with his petite wife of forty years, Wendy, the nurse. I love the story of how they met, heard in the bar of course.

Philippe had been in the French army and on a whim applied to immigrate to Australia, a country he knew nothing about though he vaguely remembers having seen "Skippy the Kangaroo." Actually, Philippe had spent his last youthful years in Spain where things hadn't gone well and "it was either emigrate or commit suicide "Not only was the fare out super cheap but on his first day in the migrant camp he was handed \$25." Sh...t!" What a country!", he recalls saying.

He'd been in the country just five days when some mates at the migrant camp said there was a Spanish club at Liverpool and so they all piled into a taxi. There was already a fortune on the meter before they realised that the Liverpool they wanted was not way out of town, but a street in the city. But when they finally arrived club was great and upstairs there were a few girls eager to dance.

He and his friend went up and found two girls, Philippe grabbing the prettier one, he claims. When he revealed to her that he was actually French, not Spanish. "I got a very positive reaction," he remembers. It turned out this girl, Wendy, had been studying French in her native New Zealand before coming over to nurse and had dreamt of meeting a Frenchman on whom she

could try the romantic language. Philippe thought that New Zealand was in Africa but that didn't seem to matter.

"How long before you saw her again?"
"The next day. I went to the nursing hostel and said, "Where would you like to go, Wendy?" "To the hotel," she said. "That's pretty good", I thought. "These New Zealand girls..... But it was a pub she wanted". "I knew he wouldn't understand the word, pub", chimes in Wendy, coming into the bar.

As things got more serious it became time to cross the Tasman to meet her parents. Philippe remembers trying to convince her Dad, a man of the cloth, that a bottle of wine was an appropriate thing to have on the dinner table. The Dad came round and gave away his daughter

to the deep voiced Frenchman with whom Wendy's now spent the last forty-two years.

Philippe and I have often been at loggerheads over the Avoca theatre development but that hasn't stopped a firm friendship. Around twelve years ago we celebrated Obama's first presidential victory at Philippe's place. I went around with my video camera, asking people about the exciting new era we thought was about to dawn. We got that wrong but Philippe's bar goes on. MR



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Hard work pays off



Alf Meyer, another of our local personalities, made it to Australia in 1961, some 10 years before Philippe Bauve. (see story on Philippe) As a child, Alf survived the war in Germany on a farm. He thinks the farmer probably sold milk to the army to keep them away. After the war when Alf was fourteen, he got a job as a mess boy on cargo ships and travelled

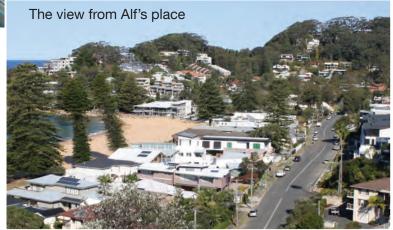
the world.

At school he'd had good marks for art and so sick of the sea, he went into signwriting. He had a brother who was importing wool from Australia who suggested that the land down under might be the place for Alf. Three months later he got an acceptance letter and was on his way here. He remembers an early surprise at Bondi. Seeing a sign with "hamburger" on it, he rushed to say hello, thinking it must be Germans from Hamburg.

Like Philippe, Alf met his wife at a club, a German club at Stanmore. This was Pam who also was looking for someone foreign. Was it a problem having Adolf is a first name, I asked? No, but when working in Wangaratta a kindly landlady suggested he go as Alf, and so now he answers to both. He said it was curious that Pam's Dad who'd fought in two world wars against the Germans had no objections to Alf marrying his daughter. "A good, man," says Alf.

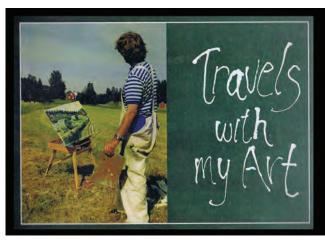
Soon he had a flourishing signwriting business going. Unlike in Germany where the lettering was always traced out, he learned to work freehand and was quickly polishing off signs for butchers, restaurants and clubs. It was a pretty good living and along came three daughters. Eventually, to deal with Pam's craving to be close to the sea, they got a block of land at Avoca, selling a houseboat on Berowra to help pay for it.

The modest house is full of his paintings, seascapes and a wonderful scene from a holiday



in Greece you see behind him on the couch. ALF often stands on his balcony looking down on Avoca today towards the picture theatre. A sea of concrete meets the eye (second photo). Massive houses have taken out most of the greenery that used frame the foreshore cottages.

"It's crazy" says Alf. "People come here because they supposedly love the lifestyle and then they help to ruin it." In his front yard he has a burbling fountain retrieved from the demolition down below. Pam died a few years ago but Alf is happy in his little house, every wall a different colour and of course his magnificent view. "I can say I planted the apple tree and now I'm eating the apples." MR



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It was a piano for peace...and it's gone

After her Ephemera concert for the 5 Lands Walk, Yantra de Vilder left a charming old piano in Hunter park, a gift from Nicole de Mestre. As I'm sure you know, Yantra, our resident composer and musician, is apt to do audacious things like this. The piano, old but still tuneful, was decorated with her paintings of Avoca, scraps of Darkinjung legend and even the score of the music she played at Ephemera. Yantra alerted council to the piano being in the park and part of a worldwide movement, Pianos for Peace. Council did not bother to reply, she reports.

So from June to early October 2017, the piano sat under shelter in the park, enjoyed by hundreds.

Above is local musician Chris Ball, belting out a tune. Then on the long weekend at the beginning of October, some young louts, not locals perhaps, thought it would be fun to smash the piano which they effectively did.

Yantra was overseas at the time on a scholarship

at Banff in Canada. She's shocked by the difference between the reverence and support for the arts in Canada and not only this vandalism, but the general low value in our community placed on the arts.

From the photos sent to her, Yantra thought she could fix the piano and said she would do so on her return. But the day before she came back, telling neither her nor anyone else, the broken piano was taken, presumably by council and

probably to the dump. Yantra has access to another piano but she won't install it until a surveillance camera is covering the spot. She ran into the new mayor, Jane Smith at an Avoca screening, told her the sad story



and was invited to send an email. That didn't go down well with Yantra, that email invitation. She is planning to report the removal to the police since it's theft of her copyright material, her art with

which the piano was adorned. I think it's the right thing to do and perhaps a warning to council that we expect more that an invitation to email.

Of course it's hard, as we head into life with this new council so large and inevitably so remote, to

expect more. If we had more intimate responsive local government, smaller scale, like they do in other parts of the world: in the UK, France, and New Zealand for example, the sad fate of our public piano might score more attention.

One good thing, Council has alerted us to their plans to paint over the murals on the Ficus Avenue toilet block, and we have been given time to strongly object. MR



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A good male dance partner is a very rare find

So says Julie Pickett who's still dancing, still performing cabaret numbers in her 60's. She's part of group called The Gals who perform in nursing homes and retirement villages, anywhere that things need livening up.

In the top photo you see Julie, fourth from the left in the top hatted line up. On the right in the lower photo, she helps Olive Riley, who was having her 107th birthday in her Woy Woy nursing home, blow out her big solitary candle . I had featured Olive in an ABC documentary called, All About Olive, and on that day, I first met Julie and her troupe. Julie is now a very valued member of our team on this newsletter.

Julie was born in Southampton, England, loved Highland dancing as a child, learned to tap and later got medals for her ballroom dancing. When she was 21 For each routine they put on a different costume. "We have three very talented members, Denise, Narelle and Val" says Julie " who make all our costumes our headdresses and even our ear-rings." To keep to a very high standard, they rehearse every Friday at Woy Woy.

Apart from performing her tap routines, Julie loves dancing as a couple. No, she didn't dance with her husband because "that was not his thing." Did you have boyfriends that could dance?" I asked. "I never could find one," says Julie. "So few men can dance. The ones who can are usually very good and in great demand. I used to dance with an old fellow at the Entrance who was very good and who kept on going till he died in his late 80's - another good man gone."

What makes a good dancer? Rhythm, grace and coordination. You can teach style and technique but you

can't teach coordination without which you'll never make a dancer." What about learning the steps? It's not that hard. It's a fact that if you repeat a thing 100 times then you've got it and as soon as the music goes on, it's automatic, it triggers the steps.



she was off to Bermuda as secretary to the assistant manager of an Hotel and it was there she met her Aussie husband to be, Stephen Pickett, of the famous Pickett family who was on an around the world working holiday

Stephen brought Julie out to Australia and they were soon having daughters, three of them. Julie wanted to keep on dancing and joined a group called the Dixon Dixie Dancers. Then she met Betty, an ex cabaret dancer who wanted to form a group of her own.

In 2004 they became The Chorus Girls, which in turn led to Julie, ever the performer, to join a larger group, The Gals (Denise, the boss, Narelle, Val, Jacqueline, Pauline Helen, Lyn and Jo) with whom she now dances. It's not just dance they offer to the old folks in their audience. They have a singer/compere, John, who comes on, plays a bit of music, sings a couple of songs and then there's a dance routine. Usually there are six dance routines for the whole show, interspersed by songs. The group donates all its profits to the Fred Hollows Foundation.



Are you a good male dancer, dear reader? Do you realise how rare you are, how much in demand?

MR

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Pizza to go

We love doing stories about local businesses and it's high time we did one on our popular pizzeria. The place is run by Erik Celius who when he came back from a trip to his native Norway seventeen years ago, never imagined that he'd be running a pizzeria. He'd been in the business of selling government land before that. But his father-in-law owned the shops next to the supermarket in which a pizzeria operated. It was on the point of closing, not doing well and Erik took it over primarily to get it running well enough so that the business could be sold.

But it never was sold and seventeen years later, though he doesn't eat that much pizza himself, Erik loves the place, the contact with the community and has a few secrets to impart. Gluten-free pizzas, as one might expect, are very popular. Vegan pizzas sell well too. For those they use a mock cheese which they get from Canada. Apparently it tastes very much like the real thing but is made of tapioca,

arrowroot, canola safflower oil, and coconut oil, a cocktail which includes no chemicals, Erik assures me.

As for other favourites, Mexican is very popular at the moment, being spicier, with pepperoni, cabanossi and vegetables. The tried-and-true, Supreme sells well too and they have a seasoned potato with barbecue meat on the thin crust, which has its followers.

"Do your customers ever suggest a new pizza type," I ask? Actually, Rob Carlton, the actor, has invented a pizza which is now known as the 'Rob special'. It's pepperoni, fresh tomato, capsicums, chili flakes, and olives. The Carlton family come in every week to pick up pizzas.

The nearby eateries swap food, the pizza staff often eat at Richard's Malaysian restaurant, featured in a previous issue of the newsletter and Richard comes in to get a pizza sometimes. "You get sick of your own food," says Erik.

The pizzeria usually looks busy, especially later in the week. On Thursday nights when there's music, the place is jumping. Alternate weeks its either The Dorian Mode Hammond Organ Trio, playing 60's Soul and Jazz or

> Jiri's Harlem Swing playing Trad Jazz.

Takeaway, which makes up 80% of their business, has to be cleverly timed, Erik says, "because everyone wants a crisp crust and pizzas aren't as crisp after about 15 minutes, we have to time them out of the oven for the moment of pickup." "What about pasta?" I ask, being a spaghetti lover. "We precook our pasta so that it only needs another five minutes after ordering. That is actually a healthier

offering since it lowers the glycaemic index".

He ends with something very interesting to say about cheese, real cheese. They actually mix three mozzarellas together because they find there's one type that cooks better, another type that tastes better, (mozzarella can be a little bland) and a third which looks better.

It's very important when you lift your slice of pizza that strings of cheese hang on energetically to the slice below, advertising how chewy is the cheese and you have more delicious pizza to come. That's about all I learnt about pizzas at our pizzeria. See you there. MR.





Erik Celius











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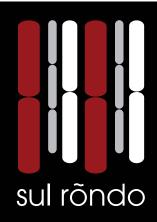
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