



November Newsletter

Sorry (this is a John Howard type of sorry!) to many of you who have been eagerly waiting for the regular "ARP" newsletter but Judy and I have been on a wonderful two month trip through Europe (Trafalgar Bus Tour) and England (hire car) so it has taken me a while to catch up! It takes a little while to get back into the swing of things and it has taken the Annual NSWPPA Conference to get me back on track.

State Conference

Once again the NSWPPA held a highly successful State Conference and many of our retired members attended the usual luncheon on the Friday catching up with old friends and many others who are still out there as proud Principals in Public Schools. It was good to see many of our newer retired Principals such as Sue Ingram, John Davies and Neil Trenear at the venue. Congratulations to the new Life Members of the Association.

The highlight of the afternoon was to see the worthy acknowledgement and Life Membership to Kevin Hepworth who was the founding President of the NSW State Conference Committee and at the age of 81 was present to receive his award.

Recollections of the Early Years

Congratulations to John McMillan and a team of helpers who searched and researched high and low across the state to gather up information about the foundations in 1968 of forming a professional association for Primary Principals in NSW and its first Conference in May 1969. John with the help of others was able to put together a small document titled "Recollections of the Early Years". This booklet contains memories of those early years by Kevin Hepworth (Founding President of the NSW State Conference Committee), the late Ron Brill (Founding Secretary of the NSW State Conference Committee), Maureen Stephenson (past Research Officer NSWPPA) and Bernie Gregory (Founding President of the NSW Primary Principals' Council). It is a long term plan of John McMillan to develop this into a full historical document of the NSWPPA from the foundation years to the present.

Excerpts From Those Early Recollections

Kevin Hepworth: "In the late nineteen sixties, Jack case and Ron Brill, who were fellow Metropolitan West principals, gathered a group of fellow principals together and formed a committee to establish a Principals' Conference for Principal 1 and Principal 2's in the Metropolitan West Region. Jack Case became the first President with Ron Brill as Secretary.....However the District Inspectors of the time almost had a 'heart attack' and were very suspicious of the conference"- *Typical of those days?*

Just to give you a concept of the size of the schools again from Kevin Hepworth " Lethbridge Park where Geoff McAlary was Principal had an enrolment of over two thousand students, Tregear Public School where Nev Chapman was Principal also had an enrolment of over two thousand students and my own school at St Mary's North had an enrolment of one thousand seven hundred and sixty students." – *You don't get those numbers these days!*

From Ron Brill “In the early stages of these meetings of principals, both Departmental officers and the NSW Teachers’ Federation regarded us with mistrust.....Our low point was an invitation from the Area Director Jim Thompson to Jack Case and myself to discuss future conferences. I clearly remember him saying that we could hold one more conference to which he would appoint a District Inspector to observe and report to him. We both strenuously opposed such action and countered that he personally should attend. He attended and the matter lapsed. Indeed, thereafter he was actively supportive.” – *Today we call that a win/win situation?*

From Maureen Stephenson commenting on the changes that came from the 1960’s to the 1980’s: “Society like schools, was changing. Educational innovation was encouraged as schooling was seen as a means of healing society’s ills. Demands, often unrealistic, to cover a multitude of subject areas, were imposed on schools. The fact that many of these demands were unrelated to educational achievement and beyond the resources of most schools did not deter the agitators.....Deprived of a forum, Principals experienced a sense of professional isolation regarding themselves, to quote Geoff McAlary, as ‘the Lone Ranger out there on the prairie’ - *I’m sure we have all felt like that in our careers!*

From Bernie Gregory “Until the emergence of State Council, basically all professional matters pertaining to schools were firmly in the hands of the upper echelons of the Department of Education hierarchy. Suddenly, for the first time, Principals were being consulted on matters of professional importance and heed taken of their collective input.” - *I’m sure there are some DET officers who would like to go back to the old days!*

Contributions

As Publicity Officer if you have any personal contributions you would like to share with others I would appreciate you sending them to me for possible publication in this newsletter. They can be sent to kpares@bigpond.net.au . I caught up with Geoff Scott, the current President, Jackie Malecki Deputy President and Mark Hagan past Minute Secretary at the Conference and with a pleasant meal and a few drinks many different stories were told. Mark Hagan mentioned that the Director at the time Doug Swan spoke at his school assembly at which he talked about the “captain steering the ship” etc. and at the end a young student up the front put up his hand and asked “How big is your boat?” I think that is why the difference between literal and metaphoric meaning became a part of the curriculum!

I remember well my first day as a teacher at North Wagga school under the Principalship of Merv Rolfe (the late Sid Rolfe’s dad). I had certain children from Y3 to Y6 (not at the talented and gifted end) lumped together in a small craft room and it was only just before lunch that I realized I had another student who had spent the entire morning hidden under a curtain around the sand tray! Remember those sand trays!

Christmas Luncheon

You will soon be receiving a reminder from Colin Labrie about the Christmas luncheon on Wednesday 5th December at the Ryde/Eastwood Club. We hope to see you there.

Ken Pares
Publicity Officer.